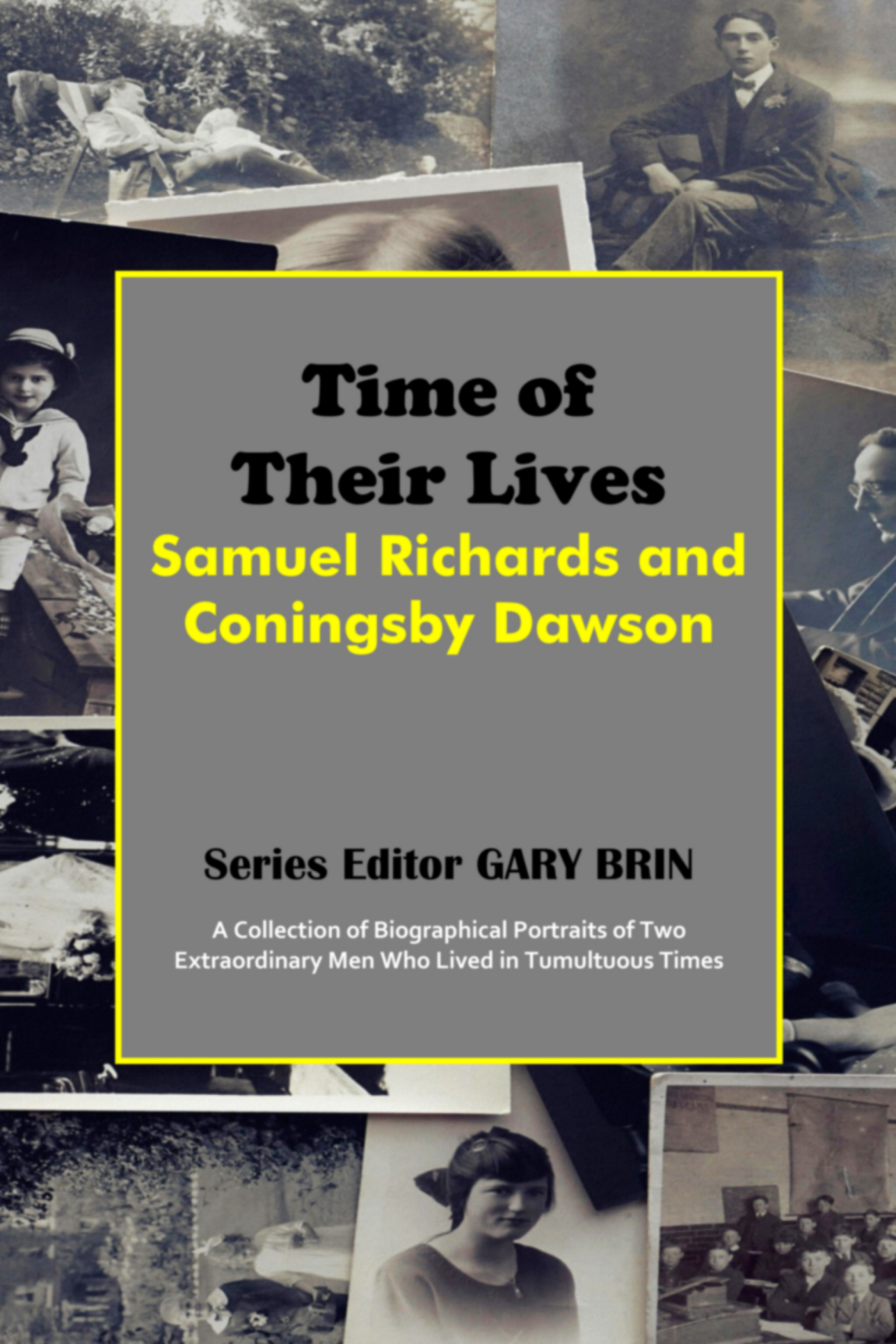

Time of Their Lives

Samuel Richards and Coningsby Dawson

Series Editor GARY BRIN

A Collection of Biographical Portraits of Two Extraordinary Men Who Lived in Tumultuous Times

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Standish Press

LIST OF TITLES USED FOR THIS COLLECTION

Diary of Samuel Richards was originally published in a limited edition in 1909.
Carry On: Letters in Wartime was originally published in 1917 by John Lane Company.
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MANUFACTURED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

In Memory of

Samuel Richards
& Coningsby Dawson

Two men who witnessed incredible events in two different centuries—one a plain-spoken soldier and the other a gifted writer using his pen to record scenes of war.

Contents

Page 11
Introduction
Page 17
Samuel Richards
Page 133
Coningsby Dawson
Page 267
Epilogue
Page 271
About the Authors
Page 272
About the Series Editor

Introduction

This dual biographical collection detailing the war experiences of Samuel Richards and Coningsby Dawson are actually two books that were published separately in 1909 and 1917. In order to retain as much of the historical accuracy of each title, both books were reprinted from page image scans of the originals. Text of both books in this edition were not changed or corrected from the original publications. It should be noted that page images from the original books were renumbered in order to merge into this present edition—but text remains unchanged as previously stated. The original copies of both books featured can be found online at the Nancy Hanks Lincoln Public Library.

Diary of Samuel Richards was first published in 1909 and lovingly edited by his great grandson George Stanley Woodward. Richards initially recounted his story in diary-form some years after his service in the American Revolution and though not a skilled writer he paints a compelling vision of what he personally witnessed of a war that created a new nation. In his memoir Richards mentioned numerous famous people in his writings, including Nathan Hale, whose tragic story defined the ultimate sacrifice for one's country. Once the war ended Richards settled upon an ordinary life as a devoted father and loving husband.

Carry On: Letters in Wartime was first published in 1917 and it was among many books published that year serving as a document of the First World War. Coningsby Dawson at the time of his service in World War I was a well-known novelist whose works were widely-read. His letters and notes about what he saw firsthand paint a vivid picture of the reality of war by a soldier that most acclaimed biographers or historians can only imagine. Dawson faced each day knowing tomorrow might never come for him or his fellow soldiers. Considered one of the most important accounts about the events of the First World War, his writings continue to be read and appreciated over a century later.

These two memoirs about two very different individuals from different eras in history show that despite the span of over one century, the effects of war remain the same no matter the location. War is ugly and it doesn't make a difference which side someone is on—the gruesome images always leaves its witnesses with memories they wish they can erase. Before photography and video existed—words captured war at its worse—and even though visual history from photographs and video are presently available to tell stories about war—the written word is still more powerful because it takes readers to places that photographs and video cannot capture. Books like these are like a time machine where the reader can place themselves in the middle of terrible events written with simplicity by their long-dead authors without having to worry about whether or not tomorrow would come as Samuel Richards and Coningsby Dawson often wondered.

Series Editor
Gary Brin

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Historical
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Series

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GARY BRIN

Diary of

Samuel Richards

Captain of Connecticut Line

War of the Revolution

1775-1781

Published by his great grandson
Philadelphia, Pa.
1909

Enhanced version of a painting of Captain Samuel Richards
Courtesy of Nancy Hanks Lincoln Public Library

REVOLUTIONARY INCIDENTS

To My Son:—Recollecting how much I was entertained in my youth in hearing my father narrate incidents which occurred at the siege of Louisburgh on the island of Cape Briton, in the year 1745, where he acted a part—I conclude it would not be less interesting to you to learn from me some of the many incidents with which I became personally acquainted during the revolutionary war; through which I served from the commencement to the end, and coming from an eye witness in whom *you* can confide; leaving it to you to consult the many able historians for *general facts* and results as they arose in this eventfull period, and which will be long remembered and passed down to posterity; and will loose none of their interest for many generations, but will rather expand with the advance of empire in this extensive republic:

In narrating incidents it will naturally be supposed that in many instances circumstances which led to them, as well as the results which followed—will necessarily be involved: in which it is my design to be as laconic as the nature of the case will admit: the field and the incidents are sufficiently ample without much digression or studied remarks.

Those I have selected, and the manner of my treating them you will judge of by the sequel.

In the year 1774 I had arrived to the age of 21, and of course able—in some measure, to understand

the accounts of passing events, and to witness their effects on the public mind.

The shutting up of the port of Boston, after the destruction of the tea on board the ships: the arrival of an additional number of regular troops, with the accompanying circumstances, as narrated by the historians of the day, sufficiently opened the drama to the view of even common observers—of a set'led design of the british government to persevere in subjecting the colonies to a system of taxation, and an equall fixed design of resistance on the part of the colonies.

this system of taxing the colonies commenced in 1765—only two years after the peace of paris in 1763—the reasons held up in the discussions in Parliament on the subject were principally that it was right that the colonies should help to reimburse the expense of the war which was carried on principally for their defence and protection. The colonists abjected [sic]—pleading their charter rights, and the common right of citizens and subjects that none are to be taxed without their own consent, and the colonists not being represented in Parliament, could have no voice in the case: The stamp act—of 1765—repealed in 1768—the succeeding duties on paper, paints &c. and the strong effort by the duty on tea in 1773—were tests to try the right & the power of the mother country to tax the colonies; and the resistance of the colonies was in principle to oppose that right, as not existing. After the destruction of

the tea at Boston the british parliament came to the strong resolution that they had a right to bind the colonies in all cases whatsoever. this was the climax at which the subject had arisen—the british government persevering in these measures—and the colonies uniformly resisting. Those things are fully treated on in history, and only inserted to keep in mind the foundation of the war of independance and the seperation of the colonies from the mother country. The firing of the british soldiery on the unarmed citizens of Boston: the burning of the Gaspee schooner—a government vessell—in the harbor of Newport—the constant custom of the british of impressing our seamen wherever found on the high seas, all served to keep up and increase the acrimony between the mother country & the colonies.

One of our whale vessels arriving into the harbor of Newport while the Gaspee schooner was lying there one of her officers came on board & declared his design of impressing one of the crew: the captain made a mark in some salt, and declared to the officer if he passed that he would harpoon him: the officer regardless of the threat advanced on which the Captain thrust the harpoon at him which caused his death.

In the autumn of 1774 and during the succeeding winter, companies of *minute men* were formed in most of the towns and villages of New England, which were drilled and exercised with great attention.

The colonies received regular information of the plans maturing in parliament during the winter '74-5—for bringing the colonies to submission—of the reinforcement of the army in Boston: the appointment of Howe, Clinton & Burgoyne—as lieut. generals—to command: of hiring 12,000 hessian auxilliers to be employed jointly with the british against us. The news of the action at Lexington, which was on the 19th of April '75 operated like electricity on the public mind—already prepared for the bursting of the volcano.

By the 5th of May a company of 100 men, including officers, was enlisted in the town of Farmington in Connecticut to serve seven months, and in ten days were on their march towards Boston, which was then compleatly shut up: this company was composed principally of the sons of the yeomen or farmers, who furnished their own arms and clothing—and was commanded by Capt.—afterwards Colonel—Noadiah Hooker. It was not necessary to urge anyone to enlist, it was only to receive the most promising of those who offered themselves to compleat the number. I hold this up as a sample of what was transacted in almost every town in Connecticut, and probably through New England to shew the spirit which pervaded the mass of the people. And I presume that female influence in society was never more evident than at this time: they appeared to vie with their brethren in sustaining the idea of a fixed and determined resistance to the tyranical

measures carrying on against us. this spirit was continued by them in a good degree thro' the war. The few days previous to their marching were occupied in preparing clothing and necessaries for the service. a few of the men had served in the last french war and therefore could instruct their comrades how to conduct and manage in their new vocation. Previous to their marching a day was set apart for religious worship, the minister prepared and delivered an appropriate discourse to the company at the church. this—like all other public addresses of the day—was calculated to add a stimulus to those engaged for the service before them; to admonish and urge them, while persevering with firmness and fortitude, to put their trust in God for succes in so righteous a cause.

The last week in May the company began their march, and I accompanied them as a volunteer with the same enthusiastic feelings of almost every one—a small proportion of *tories* excepted—and amidst the benedictions of friends and connexions.

The parting scene, the mutual adieus of connexions was very interesting and impressive: the men had a fixed expectation and a strong desire of meeting the british in real combat. those feelings absorbed the more *tender* ones.

two waggons were furnished to convey the baggage and the provision, which was abundantly furnished by families gratuitously.

The first day carried them to East Hartford—fifteen miles, where they were received and lodged in the most friendly manner in the houses with the families, all striving how to best accomodate them.

They marched about 30 miles a day through Bolton, North Coventry, Pomfret, Ashford, Thomson, Douglas & Dedham, coulors flying and music playing as they passed through a town, much apparently—to the gratification of the assembled spectators; this being the first regular company passing to the scene of action on that road.

Arriving at Jamaica plains, a parish in Roxbury—they fell under the command of Genl. Ward of Massachusetts who was stationed there to command and recive the troops as they should arrive.

This company formed part of the regiment commanded by Colonel Wyllys, of Hartford—Connecticut, and with the other companies on their arrival, were cantoned in the houses and out buildings of the inhabitants who treated them with the greatest kindness & attention.

The orders were for the troops to parade at day break and march to their alarm post, the summit of the hill in the center of Roxbury—looking towards Boston neck, there remain till about sun an hour high, awaiting the movement of the enemy—should he make any; then return to quarters for breakfast. This continued untill the morning of the 17th of June when our repairing to our alarm post was hastened by information that the enemy was ad-

vancing across the neck towards us. on reaching our post we saw them retreating back on the neck.

They then opened a severe fire upon us from their batteries on the neck which killing but one of our men—we moved back beyond the range of their shot: we being now informed of the real object and designs of the enemy, and placed on an elevated situation could plainly see all their movements in crossing the ferry over to Charlestown; advancing through the town to Breed's hill—since called Bunker hill.

Our troops having the previous night commenced a slight breastwork there, the enemies object was to dislodge them—which occasioned the severe battle which ensued.

This battle being an important point or link in the great chain of events which accompanied our arduous struggle for independence—deserves particular notice.

It appeared that some time was occupied in crossing the ferry—an arm of the sea which seperates Boston from Charlestown—and forming into order for battle: I saw their advance up the hill by the cloud of dust which was raised.

In this interim—if it may be so called—the enemy kept up a constant cannonnade on our troops from a battery on Copps hill at the North end of the town of Boston (& Charlestown which is situated on a peninsula) on one side of which lay a british ship of the line—the Somerset of 64 guns & a ten-

der—and on the other, or Mystic side was placed several Gundaloes—from both of those a constant cannonnade was kept up across the neck to prevent our troops from reinforcing the party on the hill. You may judge in some measure of the intensity of our feelings while viewing the passing scene in all its complicated points concentrating in the great conflict then commenced: tho' I am sure no one but a soldier can fully realize those feelings—to view our brethren in arms momentarily awaiting the attack—which I can assure you from experience is a moment interesting in the extreme—to see and hear the roar of the musketry which commenced about ten o'clock: to see the enemy fall back twice before the deadly fire of our musketry—and then the dispersion of our troops and the shout of the victors; the beautifull town of Charlestown in flames—which general Burgoyne's letter that I subjoin, as giving a lively picture—and a counterpart of the scene on the British side—will add to the impresion, if not already arriven to a climax.

EXTRACT OF A PRIVATE LETTER WRITTEN BY GENL. BURGOYNE.

(Copied from a London newspaper.)

"Boston is a peninsula joined to the main land only by a narrow neck which in the first of the troubles Gage fortified: Arms of the sea and har-

bor surround the rest. On the other side of one of these arms to the north is Charlestown, or rather was, for it is now rubbish, and over it a hill, which is also like Boston, a peninsula. to the South of the town is a still larger slope of ground containing three hills, joining also to the main by a tongue of land and called Dorchester neck. the heights above described both to North and South, in the soldier's phrase, command the town, *i. e.,* give an opportunity of erecting batteries above any you can make against them, and consequently they are much more advantageous. it was absolutely necessary we should make ourselves masters of these heights, and we prepared to begin with Dorchester, because from particular situations of batteries (too long to describe and unintelligible to you if I did) it could evidently be effected without any considerable loss: everything was accordingly disposed. My two colleagues and myself* (who by the bye have never differed in an iotta of military sentiment) had in concert with Genl. Gage formed the plan.

Howe was to land from transports on one point, Clinton in the center, and I was to cannonnade from the causeway on the neck—each to take advantage from circumstances. the operation must have been very easy. This was to have been executed on the 18th.

On the 17th (of June) at dawn of day we found the enemy had pushed entrenchments with great dil-

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* Howe, Clinton and Burgoyne.

igence during the night on the heights of Charlestown, and were there in force, and we evidently saw that every hour gave them new strength. it therefore became necessary to alter our plan and attack on that side. Howe as second in command was detached with about 2000 men and landed on the outer side of the peninsula covered by shiping and without any opposition, was to advance from thence up the hill which was over Charlestown, where the strength of the enemy lay.

He had under him Brigadier-general Pigot. Clinton and myself took our stand, for we had not a fixed post—in a large battery directly opposite Charlestown and commanding it, and also reaching to the heights above it and thereby facilitating Howe's attack.

Howe's disposition was extremely soldierlike, and in my opinion it was perfect. As his first line advanced up the hill they met with a thousand impediments from strong fences, and were much exposed. They were also exceedingly hurt by musketry from the town of Charlestown though Clinton & I did not percieve it till Howe sent us word by a boat and desired us to set fire to the town. No sooner said than done: we threw in a parcel of shells and the whole was in flames. Our battery afterwards kept up an incessant fire upon the height, it was seconded by a number of frigates and floating batteries and one ship of the line. And now ensued one of the greatest scenes of war that can be con-

cieved. If we looked to the right—Howes Corps ascending the hill in the face of entrenchments and in very disadvantageous grounds warmly engaged; to the left the enemy pouring in fresh troops by thousands over the land: and in the arm of the sea our ships and floating batteries cannonading them; straight before us a large and noble town in one great blaze: the church steeples being all of timber were great pyramids of fire above the rest; behind us the church steeples & heights and our own camp covered with spectators of the rest of our army which was disengaged; the hills all around the country crowded with spectators of the enemy all in anxious suspense.

The roar of cannon, mortars and muskets, the crash of churches ships on the stocks and whole streets falling together in ruin, to fill the ear: the storm of the redout with the objects above described to fill the eye; and the reflection that perhaps a defeat was a final loss of the British empire in America to fill the mind, made the whole a picture and complication of horror and importance beyond any it came to my lot to be witness of. I much lament Tom's absence. it was a sight for a young soldier that the longest service may never furnish again: and had he been with me he would likewise have been out of danger, for except two cannon balls that went a hundred yards over our heads, we were not in any part of the direction of the enemy's fire. a moment of the day was critical. Howes

left was staggered: two battalions had been sent to reinforce them on the beach seeming in embarrassment which way to march. Clinton then next for business took the part without waiting for orders—to throw himself into a boat to head them: This reinforcement moved to our left and poured their fire down through our entrenchment, which was the point on which the battle turned. he arrived in time to be of service: the day ended with glory, and the success was most important, considering the ascendancy it gives the regular troops, but the loss was uncommon in officers for the number engaged. Howe was untouched, but his aidecamp captain Sherwin was killed. Jordan a friend of Howe's who came to see the campain, a shipmate of our ours on board the Cerberus and who acted as aidecamp, badly wounded. Pigot was unhurt but behaved like a hero. You will see the list of the loss. poor Col. Abecrombie who commanded the grenadiers died yesterday of his wounds. Capt. Addison our poor old friend who arrived but the day before, and was to have dined with me on the day of the action was also killed; his son was upon the field at the time. Major Mitchell is slightly wounded. Young Chetwynde's wound is also slight. Lord Percy's regiment has suffered the most, and behaved the best—his Lordship was not in the action. Lord Rawdon behaved to a charm, his name is established for life.

Col: Grosvenor who performed a very active part on that day being in the heat of the battle, nar-

rated to me many striking incidents which occurred during the battle—Major Pitcairn of the British marines—mounting the top of the ditch—our works having arrived to no greater point than that—exclaimed "disperse ye rebels" when one of our men instantly shot him through and he fell in the ditch. A soldier just by the side of general Putnam had levelled his gun at Major Small—aide de Camp to Genl. Howe—on which Putnam struck it aside with his sword exclaiming "don't kill that man I love him as I do my brother." Col. Trumbull told me that Genl. Small repeated this to him in London with tears in his eyes on enquiring if Putnam was still living. I little thought on that day of the important results which the battle of Bunkers hill was to produce in this our beloved country, thro' Europe and the whole civilized world both in a political and a religious view.

The british official return stated their loss at 1052 killed and wounded: our loss as published was between 300 & 400. during the whole day & the ensuing night the enemy kept up a constant discharge on us with cannon & mortars. the next day we heard a continued tolling of bells in the town from morning till night, while they were burying their dead who fell in the battle.

Three days after this we received our tents and pitched them on *Heath's hill*—a part of Genl. Heaths estate—in the western part of the town of

Roxbury, in full view of the town of Boston & the vicinity.

Usual camp duty now became constant: General Washington arrived a few weeks after the battle and established his headquarters at Cambridge where the greatest body of our troops lay.

I occasionally saw Genl. Lee—accompanied by his two hounds. On becoming known to Genl. Spencer—I accepted his invitation to reside in his family as private secretary. I here found Dr. Cogswell as one of the family and regimental surgeon.

Here I first became acquainted with Captain—since Genl. Henry Champion and Dr. John Watrous, and my intimacy with them has continued thro' life so far.

Many gentlemen from the interior of Massachusetts and Connecticut visited our encampment.

I found Doct. Gordon the officiating minister of Roxbury a well informed & talented man: he wrote a concise history of the pending war. Almost every night the enemy would open a cannonnade from their batteries on the neck. the balls were 24 pounders and almost every house in the center of the town was pierced by them, or shatter'd by the bursting of their bombs.

Our advanced guards occupied some buildings near the gorge of the neck. The enemy knowing this directed their shott towards them. One night their fire was uncomonly severe towards one of those guard houses, and being informed that 3

or 4 of the guards were killed I went in the morning to view the place, the bodies were removed, and where one man was dashed to pieces by a cannon ball I saw pieces of his entrails and the blood sticking against the adjoining wall where he was standing.

We had a small horn work raised of earth for the defence of our sentinels: when the enemy was firing briskly a soldier peeped over the parapet to look out, when a ball just pierced the edge of the parapet and entered his body at the upper part of the breast bone, its force being nearly spent it remained in his body; I had just arrived when two men took hold of his feet and raised him up, when the ball dropped out at the place where it entered: it appeared to be a twelve pounder.

The almost constant fire of the enemy produced one effect, probably not contemplated by them; it hard'ned our soldiers rapidly to stand and bear fire; when their balls had fallen and become still the men would strive to be the first to pick them up to carry to a sutlor to exchange for spirits.

At one time they came near paying dear for their temerity; a bomb had fallen into a barn, and in the day time it could not be distinguished from a cannon ball in its passage, a number were rushing in together to seize it when it burst and shattered the barn very much without injuring any one. The barn was emptied of hay & used as a barrack.

Our guards now performed duty with the utmost vigilence, the patrolls were alert, watching if the enemy was making any movement. The capture of two of the enemys vessells in Boston bay by our cruisars—loaded with warlike stores of almost every kind—proved a very seasonable supply to us as we were very deficient in those articles.

We were highly rejoiced on the capturing of two of the british vessels in Boston Bay—loaded with all kinds of warlike stores—by Capt. Manly and Capt. Mugford—while we mourned the loss of Capt. Mugford: who on boarding the enemy had one or both of his hands cut off and he fell back and was lost.

The arrival of Capt. M. afterwards Genl. Morgan with his company of Virginia riflemen in their hunting shirts was rather a novel sight to us. about the middle of August we had erected somewhat of a regular fort on the summit of the hill in Roxbury in which was placed three 24 pound cannon—which being all discharged at once carried their balls quite into the works of the enemy on the neck, and one at least must have taken effect as I saw the next March where a ball had entered their guard house breaking & carrying away a beam—and I saw the marks of blood around the place. This was the first instance of our shewing the enemy that we had heavy cannon, and it gratified our men to see it.

The season passed on from this time without anything more than the ordinary occurrencies of a siege.

One day the enemy sent out two floating batteries upon the bay and advancing in full view towards our encampment opened their fire, but their balls all fell short of us, much to our amusement.

As the autumn advanced a considerable number of our men fell sick of dysentery that scourge of camps and some of fefers, but there was not a very great number of deaths, tho' some fine youth fell victims to those diseases.

As the term our soldiers enlisted for was about expiring Genl. W. strongly pressed them to remain a month or two longer—untill the militia which were order'd in—should arrive: to this they reluctantly submitted.

I will therefore take a stride to the closing of the campaign, as it might be called.—the beginning of December the troops abandoned their tents and occupied the various buildings, which the inhabitants had left vacant—as temporary barracks—untill February when a line of slight barracks was compleated as near the gorge of the neck as prudence dictated, just in the front of which stretched a narrow marsh, and the barracks placed on the rising bank just East of it, and partially covered by the bank: the enemy knowing our position would almost every night open their fire from their batteries on the neck, with shott and shells, which generally passing over us—fell in the marsh, where the bombs bursting gave us much amusement, which however was sometimes interrupted by a ball passing through a

barrack. One night a ball passed thro' my apartment in the barrack a few feet over me as I lay in my berth. but such things having become so common we thought little of them.

I was now serving under my first commission as a subaltern—with all the ardor which I suppose is usually felt by ardent youth in similar circumstances.

Our advanced guard were posted quite on the neck: no buildings were then standing there, and no fires could be kept up, as it would draw the enemies fire towards them, the winter being severe it was rather uncomfortable to pass a whole winter night there: but without being accused of boasting—I think I may say that patriotism had its share in stimulating us. Our only way to avoid freezing was to be constantly walking, running, or jumping. Our immediate duty was to watch the movements of the enemy at the neck, supposing they might make a *Sortie* from there: but we knew that any general movement would be by attacking at some point where we were not so well prepared to receive and oppose them. The planning we knew must be by our commanding officer of the army.

The eventfull year '76 now opened, and information being transmitted to us by our friends in England that very active measures were taking there for our subjugation; that the army and navy employed against us was to be greatly reinforced, that 12,000 german troops were hired to be employed against

us: that in parliament—among other strong measures—a resolution was passed "That parliament had a right to bind the colonies in all cases whatsoever." such information—instead of disheart'ning us—served to nerve us for the struggle to maintain our charter rights or "die in the last ditch."

The british government appeared very solicitous in selecting their ablest and most experienced generals to command their armies in subjugating the colonists.

Howe—whose brother Gen. Robert Howe—had fallen in a small action near Ticonderogue—in the french war, in 1758-9—possess'd the affections of the nation—much increased by those recollections.

Clinton and Burgoyne had distinguished themselves, and acquired laurels by their services in Portugal. Richard—Viscount Howe was Admiral of the fleet, which displayed a very formidable appearance when assembled together in the outer harbor of New York. The number composing the fleet and land army was estimated at about 56,000—of which about 35,000 composed the land army.

I recollect the brilliant appearance they made in forming their line in our front on Haerlem plain on the morning of the 16th of September 1776—we being on the heights near two miles distant from them. they were formed from the North river and stretched across towards the East river, or Long Island sound, and—as I afterwards learned—consisted of about 24,000, besides artillery.

It was heart cheering to witness the ardency ardor [sic] of our men in prospect of the expected ensuing battle.

In February things became more active with us, a considerable number of militia arrived from the country, parties were sent into the swamps to prepare materials and to make up facines. On the night of the 1st & 2d of March our batteries both on the Roxbury & Cambridge side commenced & continued discharge of shott & shells on the town, some of the balls fell in the town, for after we had entered it—a gentleman, in whose house Genl. Pigot had lodged, shewed me the hole where one of the cannon balls had pass'd a little way over his bed which he was sleeping in. a fourteen inch mortar which among other military stores was captured in the ord'nance brig by Capt. Manly—was burst in firing from our lines on the enemy in Boston. we had set a high value on it—call'd it *the Congress*. it wounded one or two, in bursting, but killed none.

during our fire—on the night of the 4th of March a detachment from our army moved on to the hights of Dorchester point—this is also a peninsula joined to the main by a narrow neck; on this was placed—on the side looking toward the enemy—a line of bundles of pressed hay to defend our troops from the enemies fire while passing it.

This detachment proceeded to the top of the hill and immediately commenced making a redoubt, entrenching tools & facines being carried there &

ready: the next morning at 8 oClock a relief was sent on—of which I was one—in passing the neck the tide having overflowed it I found my boots filled with mud and water, but we had no dry clothes with us, nor any time or opportunity for changing.

Of this event I think some remarks more than a mere passing notice are proper. In perusing the various histories of the revolutionary war I have ever thought that this [sic] was passed over in too summary and slight a manner. readers of history generally seem to be looking for descriptions of bloody battles and counting the number of killed and wounded: but the real philanthrophist must experience a higher gratifycation in contemplating a series of firm, prudent and judicious arrangements tending to effect a great object without one of those sanguinary conflicts which so strongly interest the feelings of most readers. the facts and results now under consideration afford a striking exhibition of that foresight and arrangement alluded to. Having carried you to the top of the hill on Dorchester point I found a redoubt considerably advanced in a position well calculated for defence. Outside the parapet were casks filled with sand and so placed that a slight touch would set them rolling down the hill which was very steep on every side, and thus break the ranks of the enemy on their advance. On the afternoon of the 6th we very plainly saw the enemy in motion in the town: dense columns of troops moving down the main street to the wharf and em-

barking on board the ships which moved down the harbor and formed in a kind of crescent at considerable distance from the hill.

most of the next day was spent by those ships in beating up nearer to our post—the wind being a head: we continued our work incessantly in compleating the redoubt, being urged to exertion by a full expectation of being attacked by the enemy's troops we had seen embark on board the ships; we had no time to spare for reflecting on and counting the cost of the issue of the expected battle. we did not work litterally with arms in our hands, but they were lying by our sides, and it is presumed that every one ardently wished for the opportunity of shewing the enemy what freemen would do when contending for their just rights. No one needed stimulating to the performance of his duty as every one possessed the inclination.

As night approached an uncommonly severe South East rain storm came on with very high wind, and in that elevated situation, surrounded by the sea, it was felt in all its force, but the severity of the storm did not stop our work, which we pushed forward with the utmost alacrity. The next morning presented to the view of the enemy a regular fort, far advanced to completion—and to our view their ships below apparently in a very disorderly condition: the day passed without any thing worthy of particular notice. You may form some faint idea of our situation; thoroughly drenched by the copious

rain, exhausted by severe exertion and want of refreshment, & of course without cover.

At evening we broke ground on Nook, or Nuke point, a small hill very near the water oposite South Boston. The enemy could plainly hear the sound of our entrenching tools, on which they opened and continued an incessant cannonade with a general direction towards this point. I counted the number of discharges up to about 1500 during half an hour and then left off counting; this firing was continued through the night, and the morning shewed a novel sight; the ground all around where the work had been carrying on appeared as if it had been plowed irregularly, and a very great number of cannon balls were picked up: but strange as it may seem there was but a surgeons mate and two privates killed during the night.

By the enemies inactivity for several succeeding days we concluded they had abandoned the idea of attacking our fort.

This comparative inactivity continued untill the 17th of the month when the whole of our troops were paraded and commenced our march into Boston, it being announced that the enemy were evacuating it. I had the gratifycation of being selected to carry the American flag at the head of the column which entered from the Roxbury side.

When arrived in the town numerous incidents crouded upon our view: I can particurize [sic] but few of them. The burst of joy shown in the counte-

nances of our friends so long shut up and domineered over by an insulting enemy: the meeting and mutual salutations of parents and children and other members of families having been seperated and continued seperated by the sudden shuting up of the town after the battle of Lexington: the general delapidation of the houses: several churches emptied of all the inside work—and turned into riding schools for their cavalry: all the places which had been previously used for public resort torn to pieces: and at the stores around the wharves groceries—particularly salt—were in a state of destruction. As I had no particular command I rambled at my pleasure—and being the carrier of the flag attracted some attention, was almost constantly pressed with invitations to "call in and take a glass of wine with me"

I saw the last boat of the enemy put off and proceed to the shiping.

It was generally understood that an informal—not an official—agreement was made between the british commander and the select men of the town, that in case the troops were not in any way interrupted at their departure—the town should not be burnt.

The next day I went and viewed Bunker hill, and the works appeared as if they had been dictated by *Vauban*, at least the plan: The walls were of earth but regularly constructed. a variety of associations of ideas crowded on my mind on recalling the scenes of the 17th of June of the last year, too

numerous and impressive to dwell upon, as not coming within my present plan.

The next day I went and viewed the works on Castle island. the enemy had endeavored to blow up every usefull part of the works; in many instances they had succeeded, in others but partially. they had broken off the trunnions of all the heavy cannon, and in addition had spiked them up. In general every thing was mutilated and rendered useless.

I was invited to take lodgings at the house of a respectable widow lady Mrs. C. and treated with the utmost hospitality during the few days of my stay in the town.

On the 25th of the month the troops began their march by regiments toward New York, and by the 4th of April 21 regiments had moved on, ours being one of the number: five regiments being left to garrison the town. we passed through Dedham and proceeded on the direct rout through Attleboro', Seaconk plain a sterile region—and arriving at Providence enjoyed a pleasing view of that flourishing town at the head of navigation of that river.

We proceeded on thro' a barren part of Rhode Island to the border of Connecticut where the lands, buildings & general improvements appeared much better; on arriving at New London we found we had to wait for vessells to be procured to transport us to New York, we there waited five days, still enjoying the hospitality of the citizens, but the men

drawing their own rations and cooking for themselves. I was hospitably entertained during our stay—at the house of a namesake.

While at New London went on board Commodore Hopkins' ship, he having returned from his expedition to the Island of New Providence, where he siezed a considerable quantity of millitary stores belonging to the British. the powder taken was particularly needed. every thing about the ship appeared in a forlorn condition, having had no repairs since a runing fight she sustained with a british ship on her way home; she having succeeded in capturing the ships tender.

the fifth day I went on board a sloop with about 100 of the regiment—on the commencement of a N. East storm and were driven rapidly on through the sound: in passing thro' Hurlgate, or as it is popularly called Hellgate—our vessell ran on *the middle rock,* an unpleasant and dangerous circumstance indeed. As the vessell ran on at high tide, when it ebbed she slid off without our sustaining any injury. On our arrival at New York we were at first cantoned in the empty houses of the citizens, many of them having left the city to be away from the ensuing scene. we were soon furnished with tents and encampted on an open area of ground called the Jews burying ground, given up for cows to graze on—now entirely covered with elegant buildings, the populous part of the city not only covering it but extending far beyond it. For two or three weeks

we were actively employed in constructing fortifycations around the city, on Governors & long islands, besides furnishing guards at the various points. Incidents were not wanting to occupy our attention. Being on guard one day and walking in the front of a large sugar house filled with british prisoners—recruits—captured in a transport ship,—seeing the serjeant relieve the sentry I heard a female voice making a pityfull moan, I stepped to the door and asked her the cause of her mourning. she replied that it was for the loss of all their farming tools, such as axes, hoes &c &c—on board the ship when they were captured. I asked what they were going to do with those articles had they kept them she said that after they had subdued the rebels and taken possession of their lands, they were going to work with them on the land.

I saw with pain the execution of one Thomas Hickey a soldier who had been retained in the family of Genl. Washington. he was convicted of being concerned in a plot either to take the life of the general, or to assist in taking him personally to deliver up to the enemy. July 12th being on guard on the grand battery I saw two of the enemy's ships get under weight and passing our batteries—proceed up the Hudson under full sail, not appearing to receive any injury from the shott from our batteries: those were the Phoenix 44 & the Rose 28 guns. they anchored in Tapan bay: their object appeared to be to reconnauter, to find the position and strength of

our works. in our firing on them we had a 32 pounder burst killing three men.

The British commissioners having now arrived with Admiral Lord Howe at their head—to propose terms of accomodation with the colonies—being on guard at the battery I saw a barge approach from the Admirals ship, and meeting our barge—delivered a package, and returned. this being the first step taken by the commissioners, it attracted much notice, and the terms proposed and offered were soon published: they were a submission on our part: on their part offers of pardon for the past, and a pacific arrangement to take place between the british government and the colonies: this being published in history I need not go into detail of it.

I used frequently to go on board the fire ships—small vessells preparing with a design to blow up or destroy some of the enemys ships—On the night of the 3d of August five of our row gallies proceeded up the river under the command of Col: Tupper and commenced an attack on one of the enemy' ships: but without much effect.

On the night of the 16th our fire craft succeeded in burning one of the enemy's armed vessells in the North river, in which Serjeant Smith of Connecticut after applying his match to the train—jumbed [sic] overboard to one of our boats, but was so severely burnt that he died of his wounds. The effects of our fire crafts here ended, and operations on a greater scale commenced.

On the landing of the enemy on long Island on the 22d of the month—and the *general* succeeding transactions consequent on it—at this important crisis—the historian has been copious and undoubtedly correct so far as he goes: yet a sufficient number of *incidents* remain to occupy the attention.

Probably no period of our revolutionary struggle was more critical than this. It is well known that at none had the enemy concentrated a more numerous or better appointed army than at this: their foreign mercenary—as well as their own regular troops having all arrived and landed, and began their operations. The day after their landing our regiment—among others was ordered on, and myself—being in full health—of course marched with it and remained there on active duty untill the memorable retreat on the night of the 29th. The part falling to me to act was one of the detachment of 2400 posted at the woody heights of Flatbush, and overlooked the plain where the enemy lay. the detachment was divided so as to occupy the only three passes through which the enemy might advance, if not secured. Their advanced guards were posted so near us that their shott reached us from their german rifles. they also annoyed us with their grape shott from their field pieces. The soldier well knows that when the smoke from the muzzle, and the vent of the gun is seen in the same line with himself—the piece points directly towards him. being in such a situation at this time I remember I stepped behind a tree to avoid

the shott discharged from one of their pieces. when the grape had passed I perceived that one of them had struck the tree behind which I stood.

Those being the only passes through which the enemy could approach directly, and as our force so posted was viewed sufficient to defend them—both bodies remained in that position till the night of the 26th. I well remember that all the former part of the night their front guards appeared very active, frequently passing and repassing us and their fires doubtless to attract our attention from their principal movement, which was during the night—moving round and turning our left flank, approaching by the Bedford road: the remainder of the night passed as usual; not indeed very quietly—untill just at day break when we were attacked in front by the enemy which we soon repulsed, and almost at the same time an attack commenced on our rear: on which a retreat was ordered, and a scene most disastrous ensued. Those from the three posts retreating seperrately were met by the enemy in solid body and driven back alternately on either body of the enemy. during the night another strong body of the enemy had landed, which moved and joined the first assailants thus heming in our troops—except about 700 or 800 of the 2400—of which number I was one—who made our way thro' the enemy's fire—to our entrenchment at Brooklyn.

As I at seting out, informed you my narration should be of *Incidents* not mentioned by the general

historian, and altho' he has been somewhat particular in describing the several points of attack by the enemy and the general results, yet the scenes of this memorable day were so complicated that enough remains to be told to occupy an inquisitive mind.

Huntington's—a Connecticut regiment, falling under the command of Genl. Lord Stirling—he being general officer of the day—this body of about 1000 being bro't together sustained the attack of the enemy with firmness, drove them back and made a number of prisoners; the enemy being reinforced at that point our troops surrendered. We being called rebels the most barbarous treatment was inflicted by the enemy.

Capt. Jewet of Huntington's regiment, an officer much respected and beloved, of elegant and commanding appearance and unquestionable bravery—was murdered in cold blood—having surrendered his sword when demanded—the officer on receiving it instantly plunged it through his body. Our wounded were principally put to death by the bayonet. This I did not see—as you will notice by my remarks, but it was told to me by an officer of that regiment who was present and witnessed the transaction, and on whose veracity I could depend.

We were indeed hardly pressed by the enemy: one of my soldiers near me fired on one of those murderers and brought him down, leaving his own black gun—he siezed the brighter one of his fallen enemy, the bayonet of which I perceived was bloody

more than half its length. Our loss on that day you will see stated in history. No mention being made of the wounded, it is presumed they were dispatched by the bayonet.

No one unused to such scenes can form any just idea of the confusion and vicissitudes of that day. in the flight of those who broke through the enemy, numbers plunged themselves into a millpond and other marshy places which intercepted them, rather than to fall into the hands of the enemy, and were principally either drowned or shott.

Those of this advanced body who escaped—joined their regiments, and the main body formed on the swell of ground in Brooklyn behind the slight entrenchment which had been hastily thrown up and rails cut in two and stuck in the earth on the top, as at Bunker hill in that battle.

Between nine and ten in the morning the enemy appeared in force in our front, and advanced to about 300 yards distance from us, and an attack was momently expected; indeed a firing had commenced on our right. at this interesting crisis General Washington having arrived rode slowly past our rear, animating and encouraging our troops. When passing the place where I was posted he said in an annimating tone—which I distinctly recollect "Remember what you are contending for." The bulk of his speech at this memorable crises, which is preserved—I did not hear, he being too far on my right to be heard. The enemy instead of commencing the attack moved by

their right—round the swell of a small hill and were soon out of sight. I could never conceive of any good reason for general Howe's retrograde movement as it appeared by his official letters that he commanded in person through the day, except his recollection of the Bunker hill battle: our troops being similarly situated to receive him, and his known tenderness of the lives of his men, added to a confidence of his ultimate success.

Things lay apparently still for the two succeeding days: on the 29th just at dusk we commenced our memorable retreat across from our position at Brooklyn, to New York, and an interesting and busy scene it was: but from the regularity and order which was preserved—no untoward accident occurred. A dense fog arose early in the evening and continued all night, and till late in the morning: and it appeared afterwards that the enemy knew nothing of our movement untill it was completed.

The enemy were now in full possession of our works on Long Island, and Governors Island: and I noticed from day to day the removal of our military stores from the city: and it soon became evident to a common observer that things were in a train for evacuating the city.

On the evening of the 14th the greatest part of the troops marched out and took post on the bank of the East river just below Kip's bay—about three miles from the city. Myself being one of the body —we were posted behind a slight entrenchment re-

cently thrown up, opposite and near which lay five ships. on the 15th as the morning advanced we saw the road opposite to us—the sound not being two miles wide at that place—filled with a dense column of the enemy moving down to the waters edge and embarking on board flat boats. knowing their object we prepared to receive them.

As soon as they began their approach—the ships opened a tremendous fire upon us. the column of boats on leaving the shore proceeded directly towards us; when arriving about half way across the sound they turned their course and proceeded to Kip's bay—about three quarters of a mile above us—where they landed: their landing there being unexpected they met with no opposition: the firing from the ships being continued—our slight embankment being hastily thrown up—was fast tumbling away by the enemy's shott. Our troops left their post in disorder, and before being rallied the enemy had completely formed in the road on the adjoining hill. our regiment with some others being ordered on the Bloomingdale road and to march towards Kingsbridge. the weather being unusually hot for the season, the men suffered severely from thirst, not finding any water untill we arrived at a spring near Kingsbridge. On passing by the body of the enemy on the hill road they opened a sharp fire on us with their field pieces, but they being on higher ground than we, their shott—as usual in such cases—passed over us.

On arriving at the spring I found a great number around it contending for the water. I was shewn a man lying dead who I was told had died from drinking the water; he proved to be a captain Crosby of the militia from Connecticut. I was shewn by the side of a fence, a soldier who they said was dying, or was dead, from drinking the water: I had him raised up and thoroughly rubbed, his mouth pried open—his jaws being set—and some brandy poured down his throat—I left him recovering, with my heart glowing with the reflection that I had been the instrument of saving a fellow man from immediate death.

We were employed principally thro' the succeeding night in throwing up a slight entrenchment on the brow of the hill called Haerlem heights, in full expectation of being attacked by the enemy in the morning.

When the morning arose—at about 9 or 10 oClock I saw the enemy in the plain below us, at the distance of about three quarters of a mile—forming in a line: by accounts afterwards their number was said to exceed twenty thousand—they indeed made a brilliant display: by the reflection of the suns rays on their arms in wheeling.

The sharp action which took place that day under the command of Col. Knowlton is so circumstantially detailed by the historian I need not repeat it. here I first saw Lt. James Munro, he had volunteer'd to go to the attack on our right under command of

Col. Knolton. The next day I had a mournful duty assigned to me—the command of a covering party over the fatigue men who buried the dead who fell in the action the previous day. I placed myself and party on a small eminence so as to see the men at their work, and to discover the enemy should they approach to interrupt them. there was 32 or 33 bodies found on the field, and were drawn to a large hole which was prepared for the purpose and buried together. One body of a fine limbed young man had been brought into the camp with a bullet hole in the breast near the region of the heart. I was struck with reflections on the force of habit: to see those fatigue men performing this duty with as little concern as they would have perfomed any common duty. Two days after this we marched across King's bridge and took post on the high ground a little beyond it.

After our army had passed Kingsbridge Eastward and lying a short time, a detachment of about 250 was ordered to proceed in the night—down Haerlem creek and endeavor to capture an out post of the enemy on Monterures Island, near the mouth of the creek: the crew of the front boat landed promptly at the signal, when the sentinels fell back, but the other boats unaccountably laged behind—when the enemy rallied and fell upon the party which had landed and very much cut them up: a few got on board their boat and effected their retreat: a number of

our men remained prisoners: a Major Henly was killed—thus the enterprise wholly failed.

Two of the enemys ships of a 44 & a 28 guns were lying in the straight just south of Hurlgate—a detachment of artillery with two pieces of cannon was ordered to go in the night & post themselves abreast of them, they lying within the range of cannon shot from our shore: the artillery opened their fire on them as soon as light, which was briskly returned by the ships. I had the command of a covering party of 35 men taking our station on a knop a little above the artillery so as to watch the motion of the enemy in case of landing.

the enemies fire being brisk we lay flat on the ground—their cannon balls passing over us. As we lay at the foot of a large rock one of their balls struck the rock above our heads & fell down just by me & within my reach. when it became still I felt on it with my hand & found it very hot, it was a 24 pounder. The two ships fell down with the tide and hauled round behind Blackwell's island out of the reach of our shott. we did not know the damage we did to them. As they lowered down a boat & filled it with men one of our shot capcized the boat & the men were thrown into the water. We could plainly discover that our shot told against the sides of the ships, but we did not learn the effect. Capt. Crane—afterwards Col: Crane received a slight wound in his heel from one of their shot, which was all the injury we sustained.

In hasty retreat from N. York our tents were left behind and for some time we lay without cover.

I was ordered with a small detachment—to take charge of sixteen hessian soldiers who had been captured a few days before—and crossing the North river into Jersey proceeded down to fort Lee, delivering the prisoners to the care of Genl. Green. Those were well built young men, very athletic. As they were the first hessians we had taken—as we passed along the road they attracted much attention, and procured for me many civilities & some substantial refreshment.

On my return I found the battle of White plains had taken place and much to my regret I could act no part in it.

As the enemy landed at Frogs neck, up the sound from us, we in a few days were ordered to cross the river into Jersey. Here for a few weeks few incidents occurred under my notice worthy of remark. Our regiment was left to cover the country, and repel any small foraging party of the enemy; the main body of our troops moving southward towards Philadelphia.

As the enemy had landed above us and were in full force—our army retreated across King bridge—a large number of craft of different sizes being collected in Haerlem creek—were set on fire & burnt to prevent their falling into the enemies hands. the sight of this occasioned a very disagreeable sensation in my mind: but the loss of fort Washington—

a few days after—with its garruson of 2700 men filled us with deep melancholly—for the time. still our fortitude and fixed determination was unabated.

As we passed fort Lee—on the West bank of Hudson river the fort was evacuated & the garrison joined us—marching into New Jersey.

I should be glad to narrate to you from personal observation—the circumstances attending the capture of the enemy at Trenton and Princeton: but those transactions, being so important are circumstantially detailed in history as are others—the most important battles: and the regiment to which I belonged was, among others—left near New York to watch the movements of the enemy in that quarter. Common prudence dictated to have a strong body of troops kept up in & near the Highlands at all times to be ready to repel the incursions of the enemy either by land—from New York, or by the Hudson river.

A very prominent position which our army occupied was Peekskill—a village 40m. above New York, and properly at the commencement of *the Highlands*: it seemed formed by nature as a defensable place; a chain of hills ran from the S. West or North river side—North Eastward several miles with a mural like front to the Southward; might be easily defended from an attack in front, and with proper precaution the flanks might be secured from being turned.

This post was frequently occupied by our army in its various marches and countermarches after the year 1776, tho' mentioned but cursorily by the historian, as no important battle was ever fought near it. Keeping this in view as a rallying point whenever occasion occurred—was among the evidences of Genl. Washington's segacious and solid judgment in carrying on his Fabian system in the prosecution of the war, which from almost the necesity of our case forbid our rashly pushing onward to battle. As I have elsewhere remarked—a respectable body of our army were necessarily kept in that vicinity, notwithstanding their strong desire to act in a more extended and active sphere.

A Soldier has, of course, to remain at the post where he is ordered to, and it was the order of the commander in chief for the regiment to which I belonged, to be much employed in the country between New York & the highlands; which prevented my being present at the great battles of Brandywine, Germantown, & Monmouth, as well as at the Southward. but from those who were present at those several points I used to obtain on their return and joining us a particular narrative of the transactions.

The surprise and capture of the 800 or 900 hessians at Trenton, and the successfull battle at Princeton you will see recorded in history.

In the bay below N. York the british fleet made a great display; the no. of the vessells of all sizes

amounted to about 300; and as they spread their sails to dry—after a rain—they covered a large extent of the water.

The admirals ship—the Eagle of 64 guns appearing in full sight, known by her flag, and Capt. Bushnell—of the sappers & miners—having prepared his submarine engine—it was sent one night, with a magazine of powder attached to it—under the command of a serjeant and 12 men—the party proceeded to the ship and the engine was let down under the ship—having a pointed rod at top designed to be stuck into the ships bottom; but this point not taking effect—the tide which was strong—wafted the engine away from under the ship & the enterprise failed. The sergeant who had the command gave me a particular narrative of the proceeding, and said that he was of opinion that the projecting point struck the head of a bolt which prevented its success: but I judged it as probable that the point was prevented from penetrating the ship by the copper sheathing. A similar engine was used in the Delaware river in 1777—which awakened such alarm among the british shiping.

The period of our mens enlistment having arrived and returning to their homes in Connecticut I went at the same time, and while at Hartford lodged in the same house with a Capt. Peters of Massachusetts, who had the charge of the british and hessian officers captured at Trenton & Princeton, on their way to the interior of Massachusetts: he shewed me

Genl. Washington's instructions, in which was this clause "treat them as gentlemen while they behave as such."

did not realize it that we had entered on a serious war untill the declaration of independence in July 1776. but our spirits were highly elated on that occasion—our determination fixed to persevere.

I passed the rest of the winter in re-enlisting men and preparing to go into the field at the opening of the spring.

Collected my recruits which being joined by others made a command of about 100—marched to join the army in Jersey.

Passing through New Haven Genl. Parsons informed me that I had orders to take under my command one Robert Thomson of Newtown and gave me a warrant for his execution in his own town. He having been regularly tried and convicted of having been into New York and came out with enlisting orders to raise men among the disaffected—to join the british army. the order being positive I could do no other than to execute it however unpleasant and mournfull. I forwarded a serjeant with a small party to the place of execution, to make the necessary preparation: and on the 9th of June superintended his execution in presence of a large concourse of spectators, among which were his own family.

After hanging the hour—the body was taken down and a request was made from his family that

the body might be delivered to them, which—of course—was readily granted.

As I have previously informed you, I shall not make many digressions: but I cannot avoid stoping for a few moments to reflect on such a scene, which I am happy to reflect but rarely occurred during our war. but this was a crime which when fully proved, never escaped a similar punishment, and perhaps the peculiar state of our country at the time warranted it.

That night I passed on to Danbury where I took quarters and lodged; the next morning I went round and viewed the marks of the destruction of the town by burning in April previous.

Proceeding directly onward—passed North river into Jersey, joining our regiment and brigade, at the village of Bound brook where the our [sic] army was encamped: the british lying in and around New Brunswick. The enemy being superior to us in numbers duty was very vigilant.

The small action at Scotch plains, or shorthills took place, on which our army made a hasty movement to the summit of the hill, in the rear of our encampment, expecting the enemy to attempt to turn our left flank: finding us formed & prepared to receive them, they made no farther advance, but fell back to Amboy, after burning the village of Springfield, and the adjoining villages.

When the enemy advanced toward any place the women with some of their children would flee to

our rear generally carrying bundles of clothing and some victuals with them. Essex and Middlesex counties suffered severely by their depredations. The enemy gradually withdrew their out posts: and as it afterwards appeared—in order to move with their main body to Philadelphia: but as a strong body remained in New York, which by their shiping might be removed up the several rivers so as to attack or ravage—a part of our army was left in the vicinity to oppose their predatory excursions. Our regiment was part of the force thus left; and most of the summer passed in our moving from one post to another as the movements of the enemy dictated. This kind of service was very harrassing, but afforded but few incidents enough interesting to deserve particular insertion.

We marched three times across Jersey from the North river towards the Delaware, and back.

In September duty became more arduous and pressing. General Burgoyne's army being in motion towards compleating the plan of forming a junction with Genl. Clinton of the british army at Albany,—the enemy's troops in New York frequently presented the appearance of attacking us at some point: probably with a design of preventing reinforcements being sent from us to Genl. Gates who commanded that part of the army opposed to Genl. Burgoyne; this occasioned our frequent removal from one post to another.

Being one of a detachment of 80 men under the command of Major Clift—which was ordered to pass below Peekskill around the country—as a kind of scouting party we found in the morning a party of the enemy had landed from the North river and was advancing into the country.

This was undoubtedly intended by the enemy as a decoy to attract our attention from their main object, the troops being in motion—proceeding to the attack on fort Montgomery. We lay on our arms that night: the next day was a very interesting one to us, knowing the enemy to be near us in force;

We marched to several points where it was judged the enemy might approach. It appeared that they had landed at Verplank's point at evening, and the next morning they crossed over the river & landed near Stoney point, five or six miles below fort Montgomery, the capture of which was the object of their movement: it being necessary for them to possess it both to prevent the fire from it on their ships passing, as well as to remove a massive chain drawn across the river. They advanced towards it in two columns, one on each side of bald, or thunder mountain, their movements being regulated by a flag held by a man on the top of the mountain. this a man told me afterwards—who lived at its foot, and observed all their movements after they came in sight of the fort. Fort Montgomery is situated on the North side, and fort Clinton on the south side of a creek which falls into the river at that

place, the one commanded by Genl. George Clinton and the other by Genl. James Clinton. Fort Clinton, being weak was soon carried by the enemy, but fort Montgomery—commanded by George Clinton made a very stout resistance. General Putnam who commanded the troops in the highlands had ordered a detachment of 400 picked men under the command of Col. Meiggs to move across the river and reinforce the garrison. I being one of this body had an opportunity of seeing the movements; the river being less than half a mile wide at that place: we moved quietly down to the waters edge where flat boats were waiting for us: it being now near sunset, the battle raging between the combatants in the fort and the assailants, and just as we were steping into the boats the firing ceased and we heard three cheers, which convinced us that the fort had surrendered: this had an instantanious and very strong effect on the brave men of this party, whose feelings were wrought up to a high pitch in hopes of sharing in the defence of the post. I never knew chagrin and disappointment more strikingly exhibited than on this occasion by the men both in their words and countenances.

We soon rejoined our respective Corps, and lay on our arms through the night. two ships of ours lying just above the fort were set on fire on the surrendry of the fort, and the balls from their guns passed over us in the tops of the trees during the night. The second day after we—with the rest of

General Putnam's command amounting to 5,000 or 6,000—after being joined by some of the militia—commenced our march up the river to assist in capturing the army under Genl. Burgoyne. After we had proceeded to nearly opposite the armies at Saratoga we being on the East side the river—a horseman came galloping along proclaiming that Burgoyne had surrendered with his army.

In the afternoon the troops were formed into a hollow square and the official news having been received—was read to us by the Adjutant General while on horse back. A note was also read, taken from a spy—from General Sir Henry Clinton who remained in fort Montgomery after the capture—to Genl. Burgoyne informing him of his situation.

The circumstances attending the apprehension of this spy were somewhat singular: he was a young subaltern officer who for a promise of promotion had undertaken to pass through the country with this note. The day he sat out he fell in with a small scouting party of ours under the command of a serjeant of Webb's regiment who, with his men, were dressed in British uniform which had been captured in a transport ship; their speech and appearance being the same, and our serjeant managing with the utmost address, proposed to shew themselves to general Clinton who—our serjeant said—was out from the fort and not far off. On seeing the American general Clinton he instantly discovered that he was deceived and swallowed something hastily, which

being noticed, the general ordered the regimental surgeon to administer a strong emetic, which in its powerfull operation occasioned his throwing up a silver ball of the size of a pistol bullet, which on being cleansed and opened was found to contain the note. He was tried the next day, and the proof being full and compleat—was condemned and executed as a spy. Our warm and joyfull feelings were dampened the next day by a severe North East rain storm which continued two or three days, and being without tents, and in an open country where cover could not be obtained we suffered severely, being previously worn down by severe duty and exposure.

After the ending of the storm the militia were discharged, and we commenced our march back toward the highlands. during this time general Vaughn with his detachment was burning and destroying the towns and villages in the vicinity. I saw the old village of Eusopus while burning, and though not very compact, the number of buildings was considerable, and the conflagration brought mournfull ideas to mind. those facts, of the burning—you may see in history. For a few days after we saw the enemy's shiping falling down the river, conveying their troops from fort Montgomery and their other posts.

The troops who had been the captors of Burgoynes army were moving Southward to join our army near Philadelphia: our regiment with some others were retained at and near the highlands:

the enemy's force in New York being considerable, and the depth of water in the river being sufficient to admit of ships of 700 or 800 tonns as far up as West Point.

We had now an opportunity of seeing the effects of the enemy's ravages and burning at Continental village, Peekskill, and the parts adjacent. As winter sat in we were ordered to the edge of a woods back of Robinson's plantation—to build log hutts for our winter cantonment. this was the first of the kind which our army experienced, tho' resorted to for several winters afterwards.

We had but just made ourselves what we called comfortable when our regiment was ordered to remove on and occupy West Point: government viewing it absolutely necessary to have a strong post established on the river Hudson to serve as a barrier against the enemy's cutting off communication between the Northern and Southern states. This was in the month of February 1778.

I being, at the time, senior officer of the regiment present—of course led on the regiment, crossing the river on the ice, the winter proving severe—the ice had formed very firm. Coming on to the small plain surrounded by high mountains—we found it covered with a growth of yellow pines ten or fifteen feet high: no cottage or improvement on it, the snow waist high—we fell to lopping down the tops of the shrub pines and treading down the snow, spread our blankets and lodged in that condi-

tion the first and second nights. had we not been hardned by two years previous severe service we should have thought it difficult to endure this. The pines not being large enough for logs for huts, we were under the necessity of making temporary covers of those scanty materials untill we could draw logs from the edge of the mountain, and procure the luxury of log hutts: this we effected but slowly, the winter continuing severe. In two or three weeks we had erected our huts—and a french engineer by the name of La. Radiere arriving the snow being removed for the site of—the present main fort, the works were traced out, and parties sent out every fair day up the river to cut timber and drag it on to the ice to be ready to float down to the point when the river should be clear of ice. this service was rather fatigueing to the men, but as they had a cabin to lodge in at night, and provision served out with tolerable regularity, they thought themselves comparatively happy, though their work was incessant.

Our line of huts were built just below the summit of the upper bank that they might be partially sheltered from the North West wind. As spring approached we set ourselves to collect the rough stone which we found on the surface of the ground—to use in erecting the fortifycation.

Two other regiments coming on and Brigr. General Parsons arriving the brigade was formed and a regular routine of duty was established. The

duty of Brigade Major devolving on me—those of us of the staff—had a tolerable sized log hutt erected near the centre of the plain—of the point—

La. Radier the engineer was very assidious in planing and laying out the fort: and as soon as the frost was out we broke ground under his direction. He was a young gentleman educated at a military school in France, and like many other ambitious men of his nation—was attracted by the celebrity our cause had gained by the capture of the army under Burgoyne—to come and act a part with us: but his delicate frame was not equall to sustaining those hardships which were so familiar to the soldiers of the revolutionary army: he caught a severe cold which ended in consumption of which he died about midsummer following. On his leaving the point he was succeeded by the well known Koziusko as engineer. I quartered a considerable time with him in the same hut, and soon discovered in him an elevation of mind which gave fair promise of those high achievements to which he attained. his manners were soft and conciliating, and at the same time elevated. I used to take much pleasure in accompanying him with his theodolite measuring the heights of the surrounding mountains; he appeared to be very ready in the mathematics.

our family now consisted of brigadier General Parsons, Doctor—afterwards—President Dwight Kosciusko and myself with the domestics.

As spring advanced orders and injunctions were communicated to us almost every day to press forward the works. we soon began to erect fort Putnam far up the mountain. on beginning the work we found plenty of rattle snakes, which of course—we dispatched as soon as discovered. We were in dayly expectation of a visit from the enemy, but they did not see fit to interrupt us. When the weather had become mild and pleasant in April—I went one day with Dr. Dwight down to view the ruins of fort Montgomery, distant about eight or ten miles. There was a pond just North of the fort where we found the british had thrown in the bodies of their own and our men who fell in the assault of the fort. The water had receded leaving a number of the bodies entirely out of the water, while others lay covered at different depths.

I saw many fine setts of teeth bare and skeleton like, by the destruction of the skin and flesh around. Mournfull and impressive reflexsions arose in my mind. There lie the youth who stood in the hour of their countries trial; they fought and fell to purchase the independance of their country, and there they lye without a burial—I thought too of the vicissitudes to which the soldier is subject. had the fort held out a little longer, I very probably might have lain among them.

Those scenes made so deep an impression on my mind that the lapse of time has not obliterated them, though the fleeting objects of the day pass unheeded.

One day having been to Fishkill I found on my return my tempory hut which I first built had taken fire and was burnt down, with a number of my articles which remained in it, the roof being thatched with straw.

In May General Gates came on and took the command, he had been for several weeks at Robinson's plantation, where I once dined at his table: here I first saw Major Armstrong, his aid-decamp who afterwards wrote the famous *Newburgh letters,* which came so near causing much trouble. Some pieces of fine brass artillery which had been captured with Burgoyne's army were brought here and engraved with the time of their capture.

Baron Steuben having arrived in the country to introduce into our army the prussian discipline, a french officer was sent from him onto the point and 200 men were selected to pass through the exercises, as a model; of which I had the command: and two days in a week we used to go through the exercises, with manoeuvering and firing: this was a pleasant part of duty, and was like sunshine after a severe storm.

The men were employed under the direction of the engineer in compleating the fortifycations, which had now arrived to a point somewhat respectable; beside the main work, which took the name of Fort Clinton we had erected several redoubts furnished with cannon, to resist and annoy the enemy should they approach. Thus the time passed untill

the 29th of June, the day after the Monmouth battle. the main army of the enemy being advancing toward New York, we were ordered to march, leave the point and move on towards White plains. we were joined by a body of other troops in the highlands and advanced in two columns under the command of General Gates; arriving at White Plains a regular encampment was formed; the troops amounting to 5,000 or 6,000. Here I first saw Genl. La Fayette, his person and manners were prepossessing. At parading the guards in the morning, and their moving off for their several stations he was generally present, and my official duty causing me also to be present and near him, I had a fair opportunity of noticing his personal appearance. I was glad of the opportunity as he had become a favorite to the army. The news of the treaty between France and the United States having arrived and been published—much raised our spirits. On our part of the war it was policy to act on the defensive, of course watching the movements of the enemy and going to meet them whenever they pointed their operations or made their approaches—was what employed us principally.

In August general La Fayette was detached with a body consisting of 1,500—of which I was one—to be posted in New Jersey. we had no fixed station but for 3 or 4 weeks we were placed, one night on one small hill loping down the bushes for a cover; the next night removed to another hill—to prevent

a surprise—and watching the movements of the enemy, who always having superior numbers to us were able to send out marauding parties, either for foraging or to harass and plunder.

One afternoon genl. La Fayette invited some half a dozen of us to his bush hut to spend a social hour with him on account of his having heard of the birth of a dauphin—son of the King of France. We enjoyed such an hour of relaxation with a high zest, as the occurrence was so rare.

The enemy not appearing to make any movement in that quarter the party was ordered back to join our several regiments. A few days after a detachment of 400 was selected for *service* commanded by Genl. Parsons: we—of course, did not know our object untill we arrived at Norwalk, on Long Island sound where we found boats in which we embarked and passed over across the sound landing near the village of Setalket: where a considerable body of the british were posted in a meeting house, stockaded around and within the stockade a parapet was raised and planted with a few cannon. Is seems a surprise was intended: but the water at the landing place being shallow, and we having two *iron* field pieces to unlade took up considerable time: then to drag the cannon up the beach, where the sand and pebbles was over shoes increased our delay: the noise our movement made awakened all the dogs in the village, their noise gave the alarm to the garrison who were ready to receive us, and as soon as we had

approached within the range of their shott they began their fire on us, day break having arrived—we indeed returned their fire, but they being sheltered by their works probably did not receive much injury: we had two men wounded—only, except Genl. Parsons' receiving a slight graze on his arm. Genl. Parsons finding his object so far unsuccessful ordered a retreat, tho' there was little doubt but the place might have been carried by assault: but the object to be gained would not have compensated for the loss of half a dozen men, and as they were picked men prudence dictated that their lives should be held dear.

After the battle of Monmouth, and the return of the British army to New York things lay comparatively still for some time. Our position being in the middle department, the enemy's force being concentrated and powerfull they might approach us by the rivers, or along the coast of the sound and arrive at a point we did not expect them. this kept us constantly on the alert but without producing any particular incidents to attract attention. You are to keep in mind my suggestion on seting out, that I am narrating incidents which came under my own observation; for other transactions carrying on upon a larger scale I must refer you to history, cautioning you against some things in Botta, which on reading I was led to the conclusion that he had not been sufficiently diligent in his collection of facts. Thus the rest of the year passed away, we marching and

countermarching with full confidence in our commander in chief that he would point out our steps to the path of duty and honor.

We of the Connecticut line moved to Redding in Connecticut where we established our log hut encampment for the winter, and were but once interrupted by the enemy's pushing out a party—into the country, which proved only a foraging party.

In the month of May 1779 we left our huts and marched to Peekskill. The movement of the british up the North river the beginning of June—when they took possession of Stoney point—made it necessary for us to be on the alert: we advanced near to their main body—when discovering some troops on a hill in our front—we were ordered to form and load our guns; but they proved to be a party of our own, returning from reconnoitering. All this time we lay on our arms in rediness to meet the enemy at whatever point they should attack. When it was discovered that the enemy was making their attack on the Connecticut coast, burning the town of Norwalk &c. we were ordered to make a forced march to Fairfield.

Part of our regiment only—arrived in season to have an opportunity of firing on the enemy, and that in a cornfield. I was not so fortunate as to arrive in season to share in the conflict. as I was advancing I was met by Capt. Eells who with his advance party had been firing on the enemy's rear as they were retreating. he told me he had just lost one particu-

larly valuable man, John Robinson father of Reuben, shot through the breast at his side, he was a neighbor of mine, and left a wife and three young chlidren. It gave me pleasure to see the enemy's ships depart after having taken their party on board.

Marching back to the highlands, and arriving near Stoney point on the 16th of July we heard a heavy firing during the night in the direction of Stoney point; and in the morning were informed of its capture by Genl. Wayne and the light infantry under his command. The date I take from my journal of the time.

Capt.—afterwards General—Champion who led in the second battalion, told me the second day after the capture many particular circumstances of the assault, but I dont recollect as he mentioned that the men had orders to take the flints out of their locks, as is mentioned by some in history.

I was present at the auction sale of the articles captured and saw the coat of a Captain Tew who fell in the assault—and noticed a *bullet hole* in it near the breast.

I was much gratified to find that our soldiers gave quarter to all after the surrendery, it being so different from the custom of the british towards us *rebels* in similar cases.

A few days after this was the first interview I had with Capt.—since Judge—Marshall, while taking orders at the markey of the adjutant general. After leaving the office—as several of us were walking

together he walked a head by himself appearing in a contemplative frame; I found his habit and manner to be reserved.

Count D'Estang's arrival on the American coast about this time with a land force as well as naval occasioned the british to withdraw their troops from their out posts. New York being the central point of their main army, and a communication by water opening to every point there from kept us constantly on the alert during the remainder of the season.

The last of October we crossed the Hudson at Dobb's ferry and lay several days on its Western bank. from here I was ordered to New Burgh with a small detachment to draw clothing for the brigade. having obtained it I put it on board a large Periague, and as no time was to be lost—proceeded just before night, down the river in a severe North East snow storm.

Our boat runing on a rock at flood tide she lay there untill morning when a higher tide enabled her to slide off. After remaining near Dobbs ferry two or three days that the clothing might be issued to the men—the 5th of November we resumed our march towards Morristown in New Jersey, the snow being five or six inches deep.

This snow remained on the ground through the succeeding memorable cold winter. We proceeded by slow marches to the place of our winter cantonment at Kemble's farm, a village five or six miles from Morristown, Head quarters of the Army being

established in Morristown. The winter having commenced, increased in severity and proved the most intense of any winter for the last half century. Our army—as usual—lay out uncovered untill the enemy had retired to their winter quarters, and about the 20th of December we were marched on to the ground for our winter cantonments. It was on the southern side of a hill thickly wooded, a brook running in the front: here our men went to felling trees to procure logs for building their hutts, and in about a week a line of hutts was formed sufficient to cover the army. For want of proper tools our hutts were constructed in a rude and coarse manner even for log hutts: before the mud, or mortar could be applied to fill the vacancies between the logs—it was frozen. All those things could have been endured—accustomed as we had become to them—had not our rations of provisions failed; for some time the daily allowance was curtailed: then for three days it was entirely cut off. This situation was indeed gloomy in the extreme. during the previous curtailment our family consisting of Major C. the surgeon and myself—had drawn some corn for our horses from the forage master; we directed the waiters to hull it and prepare it for eating for ourselves. to facilitate the process they used weak ley, and not cleaning it sufficiently it produced extreme pain by corroding in the stomach and bowels. During the entire suspension of our allowance of provision for three days—I having a young dog—though fully grown and fat we

held a consultation on the necessity of killing him to eat, and nothing saved poor Hector's life but the idea of the story's reaching the enemy's quarters, that the American officers were reduced to such straits as to eat dogs flesh.

On the request of the Pay Master general—I went to his quarters to assist him for a few weeks: he occupied a large roomy house in Morristown There being spare rooms Genl. Howe requested the use of one of them to accomodate the court martial of which he was president, on the trial of Genl. Arnold, accused of peculation in Philadelphia. General Howe used to spend some evenings in our room and narrated many details of the battle near Savannah, in which he commanded—The pivot on which the defeat turned, which he remarked would never come up to public view, but was like the cleving of the air after the flight of a bird. The decision of this court is well known to have issued in the conviction of Arnold, and the consequent sentance of the Court, which is generally supposed to have laid the foundation in his mind for revenge which he afterwards found an opportunity to put in practice.

Seeing Arnold halt in his walk, from the fracture of his leg in [sic] battle made a strong impression on my mind occasioned by an association of ideas on a military life, which I had observed witnessed [sic] in its most active forms during the last five years.

Winter quarters are generally supposed to give some repose to an army, the present gave us but little. part of the time on short allowance, or destitute; our clothes worn out, our pay suspended for months beyond the stipulated time, and when recd. was in depreciated paper. the winter extremely severe; no bright prospect before us of a speedy termination of the war: we spending the prime and vigor of our lives without laying any foundation for old age, and those who had families unable to afford them any thing for their present subsistence; those things kept our heads on a pillow of thorns rather than of roses. Added to all this our soldiers looked up to us urging a fulfillment of promises, or encouragement held up to them on enlistment—can it be said that any thing but patriotism sustained us?

On leaving our cantonments in the spring we marched toward the Hudson river; halted and remained some time in Essex & Middlesex counties in New Jersey. In May witnessed a very painfull spectacle, the execution of three young men of the vicinity convicted of having gone over to the enemy in New York and returning with enlisting orders to induce their comrades to join the army of the enemy. One of those was named Hutchinson, whose father —with his family emigrated from Yorkshire in England a few years before the war and brought with him some very fine horses and horned cattle— purchased a fine landed estate in the best part of Morris county where he lived in a good degree of

independance; but adhering to the royal cause, he left his estate, went over to the enemy, his family broken up and scattered, this son hanged and a brother remaining in New York; his estate afterwards confiscated. This item is one of the thousands which occurred during our unhappy struggle—if not issuing in so sanguinary a manner, yet accompanied with circumstances of great distress.

Another season of starvation occurred: while remaining in New Jersey. for several days previous to the 25th of May the rations were curtailed; and then entirely suspended. on that day two Connecticut regiments—Wyllys' & Miegs' appeared paraded under arms without an officer to head them, and directed in their movements by serjeants: Their movements had been silent untill then. The officers all sprang out and enquiring the object of their movement and their designs; they replied thro' a leading serjeant, that their sufferings had become so great they could endure them no longer, and were determined to quit the service and return home: adding that from the commencement of the year they had received neither pay nor clothing, and now provision failed.

Col. Meigs who was a favorite of the soldiers—having his sword drawn—moved near to the serjeant, who was the speaker, and commanded him to fall into the ranks and return with the men to quarters; on this the serjeant levelled his gun with the bayonet fixed towards Col: M. saying their resolu-

tion was formed and they should not recede from it. The moment was a critical one and had Marshall witnessed it as I did I trust he would not have passed it over so philosophically as he has done in his history, unless he was restrained by motives arising from the honor of the army and of the country. A short season of calm ensued and the officers assured the men that if they would quietly return to their duty, and their pressing wants were not supplied by a given day, they—the officers—would not attempt to prevent their dispersing. The officers then retired and by midday all was apparently quiet.

A brigade of Pennsylvania troops lay near us, and one of the officers—a Mr. Stevenson—came to us and remained with us untill the disorder had subsided. I presume his object was to watch our motions and report to his line, that they might pursue such measures as the case might require. The situation of the officers was very painfull; themselves being in the same state of privation with the men, but pressed by motives of duty and honor to preserve discipline, and knowing that the demands of the men were just they still had to perservere in the performance of their own duty.

The army moved toward Pompton Orange County N J and encamped; advancing at time toward where the enemy pointed their movements watching their motions, and I presume waiting for an opportunity to strike some stroke to our advant-

age. The army was thus occupied untill the beginning of September without any striking incidents.

At this time Genl. Washington went to Hartford in Connecticut to meet the french General Rochambeau who had come there for the meeting, from New Port, where the french troops of his command lay.

General Green remained as commander—during the absence of Genl. Washington. On one fine day the army which then consisted of about 11,000 was paraded and divided into two seperate bodies, one occupying a small hill and the other moved on to attack them. In this sham fight the various manoeuverings common in a real battle were acted over;

After the assailants had continued the attack for some time the reserve came up which turned the battle in their favor. The usual shouting of the victors ensued, while the defeated retreated: the victors then took possession of the hill and pitched their tents on the battle ground. The army continued near Pompton untill the return of General Washington from the East, when the catastrophy of the defection of General Arnold ensued: that produced a strong sensation in the army. every thing was put upon the alert, expecting the enemy to approach and attack West point, or strike some important stroke. two days were spent in anxious suspense by the army. A board of general officers consisting of twelve was assembled and Major André was brought before it, heard in his defence, and the proof being full and

completely satisfactory he was adjudged to be a spy and sentenced to be executed as such.

General Patterson—with whom I was well acquainted—& who was a member of the board, stated to me the particulars of his trial and the impressions made on their minds and feelings while contemplating his situation and destiny. Andre appeared during the trial altogether firm and collected in his mind and manner.

In the interim between his trial and execution an informal proposal was made by Genl. Washington to Sir Henry Clinton who commanded in New York, that Andre might be restored back in exchange for Arnold. Genl. Clinton's refusing to comply with the proffer, and the intimation thereof being communicated to Capt. Ogden, who was the bearer of the message and returned during the night—an order was given for his execution. I was on my horse and of course outside of the line of infantry, and could plainly see Andre and all that passed; he walked up the hill in Pompton the place of his execution Arm in arm with Col: Hamilton with a firm and gracefull step. My feelings had been previously drawn out favorably towards him from what had passed, but when I come to view him, an elegant and fine person, every way gracefull, at the age of twenty eight, and to be thus publicly executed, almost overcame me, but I had to endure it while I contemplated the similar fate of my former acquaintance Capt. Nathan

Hale who was executed by the british in Brooklyn in 1776.

Sep. 1776. The british having landed on long island—Genl. W. wanting to find out their real position—after due enquiry Capt. Hale of the Connt. line was selected to be employed as a spy, & having proceeded on to the island, pursued his discoveries, taking plans &c—was returning and fell into the hands of the enemy near Brooklyn. The next day was examined by some board by the enemy and convicted as a spy, condemned, and order'd to be executed in two hours, was denied his request for an opportunity & time to write to his friends, & the sentance was carried into execution. was of Glastenbury in Connt. aged abt. 24 or 25: educated & of high promise.

The remains of Major Andre were removed from the place of his interment in A.D. 1821—by order of the British government: he having been buried near the place of his execution. It was found that a red cedar tree had grown up over his grave; a piece of this tree was conveyed to England in the ship—with his remains; and the King ordered a gold snuff-box made, inlaid with a part of this tree—to be presented to the episcopal minister who officiated at the disinterment.

Altho' there was no particular battle in this department during the season, the incidents almost dayly occurring were sufficiently interesting to occupy the attention. The army being pretty much

together, In midsummer a selection of 2,500 of the troops who were judged fit to make the best appearance were selected and prepared for review on a plain. a temporary stage was raised with seats to accomodate spectators, on which was seated General Washington, the other general officers present; the french minister Luzerne: the spanish minister Don Juan, and a large number of respectable citizens from the adjacent parts.

Baron Steuben ordered and conducted the review. the exercises were commenced by skirmishes in the adjoining woods as if scouts had fallen in with each other, and were returning: after they had joined the main body the evolutions were commenced, each one preceeded by discharge of a cannon. The weather being fine and no accident happening, the day passed off brilliantly. Not long after we were ordered out to attend the funeral of Don Juan the spanish minister who died of a fever. The ceremonies attending it were as shewy as circumstances would admit, and to those of us having been accustomed to plain republican simplicity were very impressive imposing [sic]. The body was placed in a coffin in a very rich dress trimmed with a broad gold lace; his sword laid conspicuously by his side: minute guns firing during the whole time, except while religious service was performing.

As the year opened and advanced brighter prospects for the U. States began to appear: a special deputation had been sent to the french court to lay

our case and situation fairly before the king, urging the necessity of some important effort being made which should bring the war to a close. the french king very promptly dispatched an agent Courier [sic] to the spanish court, the reigning king being uncle to the—then french king—strongly suggesting a co-operation [sic] with france and the United states to accomplish the object. The spanish government readily and promptly acceeded to the proposed measures which issued in a compleat success.

As the spring opened our army left their cantonments in the highlands, took the field and advanced towards White plains; the first part of the season for the campaign was spent by our army in marching and counter-marching—it seemed as watching the movements of the enemy. The british army kept closely shut up in New York, and appeared looking sharply on the defensive for the time being; Genl. Rochambeau was with a body of about 5000 regular and choice troops lying in New Port Rhode Island—and a french fleet commanded by Count D'Estang arriving on our coast effectually prevented the british army from attempting any considerable enterprise. Thus the season advanced untill the fore part of September when the great plan which had been concerted between Genl. Washington and our allies was put in operation. The period having arrived for the necessary movements to commence—General Washington formed the plan which so com-

pletely eluded the enemy—the detail of which is minutely described in history.

The french army at New Port was put in motion; at the same time the American army began its movements by crossing the river Hudson into New Jersey: hovering around New York and puting on the appearance of a design to attack it: parties were advanced forward of bakers with instructions to prepare ovens and other fixaments for the accomodation of the army in its meditated attack.—

An express was forwarded by Genl. Washington with his letter containing directions for the forming a camp &c to accomodate the army on its arrival: the bearer—it seems conformable with his instructions—passed so near an out guard of the enemy that he was captured by them.

The intercepted letter added strength to the delusion which was designed, and among other circumstances lulled the enemy from any apprehension of the real object contemplated. By a sudden movement our army marched onward toward Yorktown: the success which followed you will read in history.

Rochambeau with his five thousand soon moved on: as they passed thro' Farmington in Connecticut I being there at the time—had a fine opportunity of seeing them. they were said to be the flower of the french army, having been raised principally in Normandy and the North of France.

Beside the officers who held rank in the army—were many men of science, as Chatteilux & others who it seems were collecting & preparing materials for a practical description of things in the United States, and which were afterwards published by them.

I was particularly struck—while in conversation with Count D'Ponts, who commanded the regiment *Du Ponts*—to observe with what fluency and precission he spoke english. at a small distance one on hearing him, would not have supposed that he spoke any otherwise than a well educated English gentleman. I viewed their manner of encamping over night, the perfect mechanical manner of performing all they had to do: such as diging a circular hole & making nitches in which to set their camp kettles for cooking their food, &c every necessary accomodation was performed in the most natural and convenient manner. They rose in the morning and paraded by day light; soon struck tents and began their march which they completed—for the day—about noon, then pitched tents and set about their cookery:

They marched on the road in open order, untill the music struck up, they then closed into close order.

On the march—a quarter master preceeded and at the forking of the road would be stuck a pole with a bunch of straw at top to shew the road they were to take.

Not being at the siege of Yorktown—I must refer you to the history of it in detail.

On the surrender of Yorktown all concluded it was the closing part of active war, which it ultimately proved to be.

Having served this the whole of our eventfull struggle for independance; and being preserved to the age of 78, I say with my feeble voice to my children and grandchildren of whom God has given me numbers, should an equal imperious call of duty ever press on you—go and do likewise.

The irregularity and frequent destitution of supplies you will see adverted to in the history of the war: but the impression made by reading it falls far short of the reality of experience. when I recall to mind those scenes I am now astonished at the perseverance of our army under such circumstances.

had we money received for our pay the inhabitants of the country thro' which we passed would have brought articles of provision to us as a market, but by this time—1777—the paper currency had become of little value. The counterfeiting of our bills was carried on in New York extensively, and sent out into the country by agents employed for the purpose. I once saw in New Jersey a large bundle of these bills in the hands of a justice of peace, brought for inspection: he pronounced them counterfeit, another justice of peace had previously judged them genuine.

When I look back I find that the close of the year 1776 and the beginning of '77 was the darkest and most trying time of the war.

When encamped at Bound brook N. J. an officer of my acquaintance called on me—after how d'e he says how do you live? I replied—very well—says he we have nothing but indian meal & that sour—with salted beef in bad order—the teamster's having drawn out the brine to lighten their loads. I replied—do you think that we—of the same brigade fare any better? he said *he* could not and would not live so: I found he soon after obtained a discharge & returned home.

The details of a lawless set of banditta constantly in action between the lines of the two armies commiting every kind of crime—robbery, house burning, murder &c. I have reserved hitherto that I might introduce it in more compact order. The various isolated acts of this kind would—if collected—serve to fill a small volume: nor can I pretend to give but a mere glance at some of them, they being so numerous.

They began as soon as the enemy became fully possessed of New York and the posts appending to it. A kind of lineway formed by their out posts looking towards us; and a similar one formed by us, looking towards them: this left a tract of country extending from the Hudson to long Island sound

of ten or fifteen miles in width, with a tolerable dense population previous to the war; the inhabitants did not at first leave their homes and become victims—pretty generally to these merauders: those who retained any moveable property in cattle or anything else were soon robbed of it.

The british commander appointed Lord Tarlton over a corps of rangers who were very active in making incursions on our most exposed places, making what prisoners he could, and his men considering themselves as free booters made light of lives which fell in their way, or in any manner opposed them.

Next to him one Barmore a native of Connecticut—had permission to raise a company of desperadoes to plunder and murder at their pleasure. A number of other voluntary companies were formed and acted in some concert, all following the trade of destruction. If the british commander did not directly authorize those things, he at least only winked at them: probably counting that they all came into the general plan of subduing rebels.

Beside those who were formed into somewhat regular companies—a considerable number acting without concert were springing up attacking the persons and property of all who were exposed to them. among those was one Joshua Houston a noted desperado who was a terror to all around him: he on attempting to enter a home for robbery was discovered & met by the keeper of the house, who

having provided himself with a bayonet fixed on the end of a stick or staff plunged it into him, which caused his death. Those for a time were called cow boys; having become very bold in driving off cows as well plundering other property.

The scenes of their depredations varied with the movemints and position of the armies, but wherever the armies were posted there was a space called *between the lines* infected by a similar banditta. New Jersey was grievously scourged by such merauders in the course of the war. Complaints being frequently made to Genl. Washington of those enormities, he remonstrated strongly to the british commander against them, and assured him if they were continued he should be forced to retaliate on the british prisoners—War operations becoming very pressing he did not have recourse to this measure untill the latter part of the year 1781, the circumstances of which I shall notice in its place.

In '78 when our troops were lying in New Jersey, an officer of the Connecticut line, on his return to his regiment, from whence he had been on some business—was shot down by some one concealed in the bushes by the road side. The assassin was never discovered, but was supposed to belong to one of those companies of banditta.

Soon after this I was designated to go to head quarters—then at Morristown—to draw money for the brigade as pay. On my return—approaching near the ground where I left the regiment—I found

they had taken up their march for a distant place: as night approached I pursued on to overtake them. I was unexpectedly hailed by a stentorian voice *Who comes there*—I instantly put spurs to my horse, he being very fleet I shot ahead of two men also mounted—they constantly hallowing "stop or I will fire on you." knowing the country to be infested by merauders and desperadoes I without minding their threats—pushed on untill coming to the foot of a hill they came up with me. it may well be supposed my situation was an unpleasant one: I had no arms but my sword, they two to one and armed with muskets: I asked them what they wanted of me—they replied—go to the next house and we will inform you: I of course went to a house when I told them I was an officer of the army dispatched on important business and—if they did not kill and conceal me—any other violence would be made known, and they would be pursued. they each produced a subalterns commission of the militia.—thus ended a scene which commenced rather abruptly. I felt indeed some solicitude for the money I had in my portmanteau, but my principal concern was for my own personal safety. This night I spent far less pleasant than the one previous: being acquainted with Col. Hamilton and Major Colfax who commanded the generals guard—I was invited to spend the evening in a room with an agreeable circle—the adjutant general of Burgoyne's army being one; being on parole he was

spending some time here; he was an Irish gentleman, highly polished, and appeared to enjoy himself & the society very well. Col. Scammell—whose memory I shall ever hold in high estimation—was one of the party.

As I previously remarked I shall attempt to give only a scetch [sic] of the outlines of their praeditory and murderous transactions.

The murder of Col. Baylor & Major Clough—of the cavalry, with a great part of the regiment was the result of one of their praedatory enterprizes. a detail of this you will see in the history.

The frequent open and private attacks, waylaying and murdering by hanging and otherways having become so numerous—and representations being frequently made to general Washington of them—he proceeded—late in the year '81 to put in force his threats of retaliation he had so often express'd. He selected from a great number of others—a case of much notoriety which occurr'd on Staten Island. A party in their way siezed on one Capt. Huddy and as usual—without much delay hung him on a staddle which they bent down for the purpose—where his friends found him with a label on his breast "Up goes Huddy for Henry White."

Those things having arisen to a climax—Genl. Wn. selected by lot—from among the prisoners captured at Yorktown—a Capt. Argill—son of Sir Charles Argill—of very respectable standing—as the victim for retaliation. He was kept in close con-

finement for a considerable time, apparently awaiting his execution: His mother Lady Argill wrote a very moving letter to Vergennes—the then prime minister in France—uring him to intercede with Genl. Wn. to spare her sons life. Those things having become a subject of considerable notoriety the british commander order'd the companies he had commissioned—to be dissolved: thus those barbarities were in a considerable degree checked, and Capt. Argill released on parole. The feelings of the mass of the people were shewn to be strongly interested in favour of Capt. Argill, as they were for Major Andre—previously; and much to the praise of their humanity. A similar opportunity occurred to shew the general state of feeling; the two British ships—the Java and the Massadonian recently captured—were placed for safe keeping in the river Thames 8 or 10 miles from New London, and a number of British seamen—prisoners—confined in them. Orders were either given out or expected to be—to retaliate on those prisoners some of the severities practiced on our marine prisoners confined in the ship Jersey lying at Brooklyn.

The populace interfered which prevented the orders being carried into effect.

In the year 1783—the war being ended—I was travelling through East and West Chester counties, in the state of New York—and was forcibly struck by the appearance of this once beautiful sec-

tion of country. the inhabitants had acquired and collected around them—previous to the war—all the conveniencies and accomodations of rural life; and the country now appeared in a state of desolation. I stopped at an inn on the great road—which was reopened as a house of entertainment—and one I had lodged at in 1774—the year preceeding the war—it was a large stone building with out houses, surrounded with fruit trees, and appearing to possess every convenience of rural life: it then appeared almost in ruins, like every thing else around it.

I said to the hostess—Mother Day your place dont look as it did when I was here in '74: No says she then we had every thing we wanted: now we found the out buildings and all the fences burnt; all the fruit trees destroyed, with every thing else—and we as poor as the *free negroe*.

Being in Boston I saw the part of the french army which had acted in the siege of Yorktown in September & October previous—enter the town under the command of Baron *Viominel* to embark on board shiping which had arrived and were lying ready to receive them. I conversed with some of the officers and noticed the high gratification they appeared to feel in adverting to their fortunate success in this country.

Being in Boston I saw the arrival of the British transport ships in the harbour—come to receive the prisoners of Burgoynes army captured October pre-

vious. A prominent article in the capitulation was "that those troops should be delivered up to the British government, with a guarantee that they should not be employed against the United states again during the war."

Our government waited for the british government to ratify the convention, or articles of capitulation agreed on at the surrendery. The British finding it would be recognizing our independance to ratify it—refused: and the ships returned without the prisoners.

It being proved to Europe and the world by the battle of Bunker hill & the capture of Burgoyne's army that the United States were able to sustain their independance—the treaty offensive and defensive between the French government and ours was ratified at Passi near Paris in February 1778: on which the British government immediately declared against France.

Battle of Lexington. The british march out from Boston to Lexington to destroy some stores of the americans: they fired on a militia company—the fire returned. The british made a precipitate retreat toward Boston, being fired on by the militia of the country.

Boston shut up. The men from the adjoining towns assembled in arms and invest it: bodies of men hastily raised and formed round Boston to keep the British in.

The middle of May the new raised troops from Connecticut & the adjoining towns in Massachusetts arrive & something like military arrangements made. Cambridge fixed on as the head quarters: a strong body stationed at Roxbury.

slight fortifications erected on Roxbury side: alarm posts affixed, to which the troops repaired every morning at day break. Things remained quiet untill the night of the 16th of June, when a detachment of our army went on to Breed's hill—since called Bunker hill, and began to fortify.

Battle of Bunker hill—the british marched out in force and attacked us in our trenches: they were repulsed three several times, but by the arrival of 2000 fresh troops as a reinforcement they succeeded in carrying our works: the enemy in his official report acknowledged the loss of 1052 men in killed & wounded. Our loss was between 3 & 400. This affair prevented an attack of the enemy on the south side of the town: as the 18th of June was fixed on to take possession of the hill on Dorchester point, by the british.

General Washington arrived in a few days after the action & took the command of our army.

troops continued to arrive to strengthen our army, which had become so strong that the enemy did not move out to attack it during the rest of the year. Our guards were extremely vigilent.

The enemy had very strong works on Boston neck mounted with a numerous train of heavy artillery,

and their firing from there was kept up almost every night, which killed some of our advanced guards. Both armies lay still untill the beginning of the next march; when on the 2d & 3d nights we commenced a heavy fire from all our batteries on the Cambridge & Roxbury side: and on the night of the 4th a detachment of ours moved on to Dorchester point & began to entrench.

during the most of the 6th the enemy were embarking troops on board their ships, and at evening they fell down to the outer harbor & formed round the point, intending to commence an attack on it the next day.

but that night the vernal equinoxal storm of rain sat in which continued with increasing violence durthe night: and in the morning their ships appeared in disorder, and the troops were not landed, but the ships returned up the harbor. it subsequently appeared that they had abandoned the design of attacking us at our post, but to make preparation to evacuate the town and proceed for Halifax. Their preparations went on till the 17th of the month when they completely evacuated the town and harbor, and sailed for Halifax: and our army moved in and took possession.

(Original entry)

The 17th of March 1776 The enemy evacuated the town of Boston—the particular circumstances of which are too recent in every one's memory to need

a new recital. the American Army immediately marched in & took possession of the Town together with what stores the enemy had left—the night before they went away they destroy'd all the fortifications on Castle Island.—The enemy then proceeded with their fleet directly to Hallifax—the Towns along shore were in great consternation for some time, expecting the enemy would make some descent on them, nor was new York out of fear—the Inhabitants of it went to fortifying their streets &c —under the direction of Genl. Lee.—Our Army now prepared for marching to the Southward & Northward to meet the Common enemy—About the first of April Genl. Thomas arrived at near [sic] Quebec & found our Army but a handfull & those destitute of almost every convenience for subsistance—scatter'd twenty or thirty miles round on different Guards.

The reinforcements from different parts which he expected to find there had not arrived—the few who were really on the ground he set about collecting together so as to form them into something regular—but while he was giving such necessary orders & making proper distributions—he died of the small pox, after a very days illness—at this juncture two or three of the enemys frigates came in sight of the Town from Hallifax—to reconnoitre & find in what situation the garrison was, in the Town, & likewise to see if the river was clear of Ice so as to be navigable by larger ships—on their com-

ing in sight, our people supposing they had brought a reinforcement for the Garrisson & thinking also that there were more on their passage—agreed to retreat while they could with safety,—accordingly they collected together, convey'd what Artillery & Stores they had, & march'd as far as the three Rivers & there made a fortification with a view to make a stand.—The fatigues our Army underwent in this department thro the winter was very great—the detachment under Col. Arnold had to perform a march of six hundred miles over a wild inhospitable Country in October & November—when they arrived they found themselves destitute of almost every necessary of life as well as warlike stores for attacking or Blockading a City like Quebeck—in a Country where the Cold is intense—the inhabitants unable & unwilling to supply them with provision—nor has there been a post in America of that importance so neglected as that for After the defeat our people were very dilatory in sending any kind of succour & relief either in men money or provisions. Quebec assaulted by Genl. Montgomery Dec. 31, 1775.—After the death of Genl. Thomas the Command devolv'd on Genl. Arnold who held it but a short time.

But to return to affairs nearer home—about the twenty fifth of March the Troops began their March from Boston towards New York & by the 4th of April Twenty One Regiments had left that place—leaving 5 Regs. to Garrison the Town. On

arriving at New York five Regts. were order'd to March & join the Northern Army under the Command of Brigr. Genl. Thomson of Virginia, & the of April 6 Regts. more under the Command of Brigr. Genl. Sullivan of New Hampshire—march'd to join the Army in that department.—On their Arriving near there our people who were left at the 3 rivers met them near a place call'd the Cedars informing them that the Enemy had been reinforced at Quebeck by Genl. Burgoyne & about four thousand under him & that immediately on their arriving at Quebeck they pursued our Troops to the 3 rivers & obliged them to retreat—large numbers of them were sick with the small pox & in a dispirited situation—They immediately communicated the infection to them—The number of Troops now collected in this department amounted to about 9 or 10,000 & in a Months time near half of them were sick of the small pox & the fatigue of their march.—The enemy still push'd on & arrived at the Cedars, while our Troops retreated before them. while the enemy were at the Cedars Genl. Thomson agreed to attack them,—he accordingly went himself at the head of about 1500 men to execute his plan, but his guides missing the roads led them round about in swamps & Morasses till they were discover'd by the enemy, who were ready to receive them—a small action ensued—but our Troops not being able to come on properly to the charge by reason of the badness of the ground—Genl. Thomson was surrounded by a

superior number of the enemy & made a prisoner of, together with 4 field Officers & about 20 or 30 men—abt. this time a party of about 300 Under command of Majr. Butterfield was attack'd by abt. 60 Regular Troops & 400 Indians & Canadians—at a small breastwork they had erected, & surrender'd without any opposition—of this party a number were murder'd by the Savages under the connivance of the British Officers—Genl. Arnold found means to have those prisoners return'd by promising to give as many more in exchange, & left four Captains as hostages to bind him to the performance of his promise.—In the month of June Genl. Gates was appointed Major Genl. & Commander in chief in that department & set off immediately: On his arriving there he found Affairs in an unsettled confused way. The Army were sick & dispirited—fast retreating before the enemy—they made but a short stay at Montreal—Chambli—St. Johns—Isle Au Noix &c till they arrived at Ticonderogue

News arrived from Great Britain during the Spring—by the way of the West Indies—of the designs of Parliament; during the past Winter their whole attention seem'd to be taken up about America—People of all ranks were *inveterate* against us & viewed us as Rebels—while the most vigorous plan was adopted for our subjection:—& the most experienced Commanders by land & Sea appointed to Command: twelve thousand Hessian Troops &

1500 other Germans were taken into British pay—& sent against America. Levies were made in England & Ireland & the land Army by that means augmented to thirty odd thousand: Lord Howe was appointed to Command the fleet & his Brother Genl. Howe—the land Army—the plan of operation agreed upon was to send a part of their Army to Quebeck: a part to the Southward & the main body to New York—in consequence of which Genl. Burgoyne had been sent to Quebeck with abt. 4 or 5 thousand, to be join'd by a large number of Savages & Canadians & retake the fortifications on the Lakes & penetrate through the Country to the River Hudson, & go to New York & join the main Army there under the Command of Genl. Howe: & by that means cut off the communication between the Southern & the New England Governments & distress our back Settlements.

Genl. Howe with the fleet remaining at Hallifax Arrived at New York the 30th of June with a large fleet & about 12000 Troops—they came into the Bay & anchored under [sic] Straten Island shore where they form'd a Camp & landed a part of their men finding themselves too weak to attack us, they agreed to lye there & wait for a reinforcement of the foreign mercenaries—which they expected soon—the 12th of July the Ship Phoenix of 44 Guns&the Rose of 28—commanded by Wallace with three tenders went with a fair wind & tide up the River Hudson—thro' the fire from our Batteries—they went up past

Kingsbridge as far as Taupan Bay & there came to Anchor—their design was to reconnoitre & learn the strength of our Batteries & perhaps find the most convenient place to land their Troops—The Troops had been coming in & joining our Army this fortnight—which now amounted to about 30,000—but as the enemy did not attack us immediately as was expected—our Militia &c drew off, & left the Army to consist of about 22,000—

The Commissioners now arrived with Lord Howe who took command of the fleet—Independancy was now declared by the Congress on the 4th of July The enemy sent two flags of truce to the General with a letter superscribed to Geo. Washington Esqr. which were rejected on acct. of the superscription—The 15th the Adjutant Genl. of the British army ask'd and obtain'd a conference with Genl. Washington—on the subject of exchanging prisoners.—The Congress now came to a resolve that if the enemy should commit any more inhuman murders on our soldiery whom they should take prisoners—that retaliation should be made on them—

The enemy on Staten Island now set vigorously to fortifying & laid out very large works; the General Officers of Our army held a Council of war to consult whether to attack them or not, but it was still concluded best to act on the defensive—A proclaimation from Lord Howe was now publish'd offering pardon & protection to all who shou'd lay down their Arms & implicitly submit.—News now arrived from

Genl. Lee at Charlestown S. Carolina—that the enemy had been repulsed in attempting to Land—the particulars are that on the 2d of July two fifty Gun Ships & 6 frigates came over the bar & came close up to the fort on Sullivans Island & there commenced a most furious fire on the fort—our people returned it with equall spirit & had the sattisfaction to see the fleet almost entirely destroy'd thereby—as they were within half musquet shott from the fort—almost every shott did execution—during the Cannonade the enemy attempted three several times to land at the end of the Island, & were as often re-repulsed—during the action the enemy had 172 kill'd & wounded—On our side were 10 kill'd & 20 wounded—

A plan was in the spring conjectured adopted [sic] to fix a number of fire ships & attempt thereby to destroy some of the enemy's fleet.—a number of Vessels & Chiveaux De frize's were made & sunk in the channell of the river to stop the Ships from passing.—They are now vigorously preparing.—

August 3d. Five of our Row Galleys went up the River & attack'd the two ships of the enemy's—after a brisk Cannonade of about three Quarters of an hour our Galleys moved off by order of Col. Tupper who commanded—with the loss of 9 kill'd & wounded—seven shott had gone thro' the providence Galley as she lay nearest the Phoenix—which was within musquet shott—the whole was conducted with regularity & coolness & the enemy much dam-

aged. On the night of August 16th we had the good fortune to burn out one of the enemys Tenders in the north River.

On the 18th very early in the morning the Shiping came down the river thro' a brisk fire from our Batterys—

The whole of the enemys reinforcement now arriving except five thousand Germans, & the southern Army after their defeat join'd the Grand Army—the enemy opened the Campaine in this department by landing a large body of Troops on Long Island & march'd up to Flat Bush about 5 miles from New York ferry: which was on the 22d.—a detachment of our Army were accordingly sent to intercept them consisting of 2400 who were posted at three different places where the passage was very narrow between the hills—these were the only passes where they could approach directly from their incampment towards our lines in a direct course, & that body of men was sufficient to defend those passes had the enemy approach'd that way.—both Armys appear'd silent almost till monday the 26th when the enemy just at evening decamp'd & filed off from their right & by a forced march all night they came round the left wing of our Guards & just at day break of the 27th they appeared in the Bedford road between our out guards & the lines—just at the time of their coming in sight a considerable body of them attacked us in front at each post, for a diversion to us to prevent our discovering those in the rear, at the same

time another body landed from the fleet between our out post & our lines & met those who came round our left: as soon as we perceived their design, orders were given for us to retreat to the lines, but in attempting it we found our retreat nearly cut off—abt. 7 or 800 cut their way through, the remainder join'd Genl. Lord Stirling who commanded on the right in consequence of his being Brigadier of the day—the remainder of Huntington's & Smallwood's Regts. reinforced him so that his little army consisted of about a thousand when after possessing the most advantageous ground—he received the enemy's attack with the intrepidity that becomes Heroes, & repulsed them, the enemy being Strongly reinforced, renewed the attack & most of those brave men were kill'd, wounded & or [sic] imprison'd, only about 150 or 200 got to our Army, some by the way of Hull Gate going round the enemy & some by going thro' their Guards—it was then expected the enemy would attempt forcing our lines which were well man'd; & march'd a column within musket shott of them but retreated without attempting them—Affairs remained in this Situation till the 29th when we evacuated the Iland [sic] intirely, but we brought off the most of the Stores—Governor's Island was evacuated the same night.—Removing the Stores & Artillery from New York was the next step to be taken, as the enemy then possess'd our front & both flanks the Army was therefore posted so as to favour a good retreat from the City—while we were prepar-

ing to evacuate the City—the enemy were preparing to land above us & cut off our retreat, the movements and manoeuvers of both Armies were therefore calculated to favour their designs—the enemy moved up & encamp'd opposite Horns hook, erected a battery there & play'd briskly on our battery, which was returned as briskly.

Our army moved & encamp'd opposite the enemy along the bank of the East River—& made lines at the most defensible places—in this way the time was spent till the 14th of September when the General designed to evacuate the City, beginning at Seven oClock in the evening & at three the Guards to march off—but by the Solicitations of his other General Officers, he order'd that at three in the morning of the 15th we should repair to our lines & begin our march at day light—the 15th the enemy perceiving by our movements that the critical time was come when they were like to loose the opportunity of heming us in on the Island—they drew up two 50 Gun Ships & 2 36 Gun frigates close under the shore & opened a most furious cannonade on us—which almost levell'd our lines as they were only proff against musquetry—favour'd by this cannonade they landed abt. 3000 of their best troops about a mile below Turtle bay Kipp's bay—the boats after they had come within about half a mile of shore—took a tack & rowed round a point of Land which projected out, which carried them a mile & a half above where we expected them to land as we did not in the least ex-

pect them here—our lines were not so well man'd, for our force was mostly opposite the Shipping, & the fire was so surprisingly hot that we could not shift our post—so that they landed without much opposition & formed on the bank—orders were then given for us to secure a retreat, which was done with as much regularity as the situation would admit of—but not without the loss of some men & baggage, but the loss was inconsiderable.—

We then march'd & took possession of the heights of Haerlem & immediately flung up lines for our defence.

The enemy (the next morning) march'd on after us & encamp'd at the extremity of the plain, about 3 miles distant from us—from there they sent a detachment of abt. 500 along the bank of the North river, which our people attack'd with spirit with about an equall number & drove them back to their main body, The loss on our side was about 30 kill'd & 60 or 70 wounded—the loss of the enemy must a' been more than that, as we repulsed them after a warm fire of three quarters of an hour.—The two Armys went now to strengthening their lines—we made our lines so good across at the heights that the enemy dare not attempt to force them by Storm.—

The enemy having a small guard of abt. 100 on Montazures Island—it was proposed to take them off—accordingly a detachment of 1 Lt. Coll, 1 Majr. 4 Capts. 8 Suba. & 200 rank & file were sent to attack them—going in boats down Haerlem Creek—

at day break they had orders to land—when only one boat out of the six landed with 46 men, who after a most obstinate struggle—were drove off—the other boats crews were so cowardly they durst not land, so those who landed fell a sacrifise to the enemy all except eight—among those who fell was Majr. Henly & Maj. Hatfield taken prisoner—This happened on the 23d of September—

On the 12th of October the enemy landed a body of their Troops on frogs point in East Chester—& another body landed on Rodmans point:—in marching up from the point, they were opposed by three Regiments which were posted behind a Stone wall near East Chester Church—who repulsed them three several times, but they having a strong reinforcement—our people left them the ground—with the loss of only three men.

The whole of the enemys reinforcement, which consisted of about five thousand Germans—now arriving they took the field with a strong Army of nearly 20,000 effective—& our Army retreated back to the White plains & posses'd themselves of the most advantagous heights;—the enemy took the heights opposite them & there lay in sight of each other.

A detachment of our Army consisting of abt. 400 were left at Kings bridge—to secure that pass, but as the enemy were posted between them & our Army across to the North River, & that party being judged too small to defend the post, they were order'd to

retreat to Fort Washington—which they did after burning the barracks & removing the Artillery & Stores—leaving the enemy masters of East & West Chester & all New York Island except Fort Washington—which had a good store of provision, a good Artillery & a strong garrison.—

Skirmises happened now almost every day between the two Armies, but they were mostly very small & the successes various—a party of Rogers's Rangers attack'd a party of Ours, but were repulsed with a number kill'd & 36 taken prisoners.—

On the 28th of October the enemy began their Manoeuvers early in the morning & show'd us that their design was to attack us—accordingly they posted a large number of field pieces opposite our right wing where was posted Genl. McDougle's Brigade—& opened a brisk fire on them, while their Infantry advanced in two Columns to the attack—our troops were formed on an eminence—& while one column of the enemy advanced & attacked in front—the other march'd round & attempted to gain our right flank as the enemy were superior in number & during the action which lasted with musquetry about half an hour—they were twice relieved with fresh troops—we having suffered considerably by the artillery—& no reinforcement or relief coming up—our troops left the ground to the enemy—after losing in kill'd & wounded—about 150—the loss of the enemy was not known—but as our troops

behaved with coolness & spirit—the enemy's loss could not be less than ours.

at the time of our retreating Genl. Putnam was coming up with a reinforcement of 5,000—but I suppose his orders were to keep the enemy from advancing any farther, & so to cover the retreat of Gen. McDougles men—& not to join them in the attack which if he had, must have drawn on a General action—as both armies were in spirits & confident of their own strength & good disposition:—but our General in consequence of the directions of Congress, was obliged to shun a General action—if it could possibly be avoided with honor.—Nothing more of any consequence happened between the two Armies in the field—They march'd, countermarch'd & manouver'd—the enemy looking for an opportunity to attack us at a time when we were unguarded —as they had no opportunity for that—they decamp'd the beginning of November & moved towards Kings bridge—burning & destroying every thing in their way.—

On the 15th they appeared before the lines near Fort Washington—on the South side of it, & at the bridge north of it—marching in Columns—The Garrison which then amounted to abt. 2,300 march'd out each way to attack them, leaving a proper Guard in the Fort: The party at the Bridge were repulsed with a very considerable loss—but while the action was at the hottest at the lines—the enemy landed a large body across harlem Creek—east of the Fort &

moved briskly on & attacked our Troops in the rear while they were fighting them in front—in consequence of which they were obliged to surrender—being overpowered with numbers.

The party who had fought near the bridge, returning victorious—to the assistance of their brothers at the lines—found them surrender'd—they then repaired immediately to the fort & so many of them got in that the Guns could not play without killing more of them than of the enemy—Who immediately sent & demanded a Surrendery of the fort—the Garrison being in this disagreeable situation—the lines taken which was the key to the fort—the fort without either wood or water sufficient to hold out three days—the Enemy consisting of 10,000 determined to storm it if it did not surrender.

Coll. M'Gaw surrender'd the fort, Artillery &c. & the Garrison prisoners of war, on conditions only that the Garrison should not be rob'd of their baggage.

The enemy now possessing all York Island—dismantled the fort & turned their force against the Jersey shore—Fort Lee was the first object of their attention—its chief design was to annoy the Shiping in passing up & down the river: it mounted thirty heavy Cannon on the water side, & but only two or three field pieces on the land side—

Our people knowing it to be untenable had resolved to evacuate it—they therefore moved off the

Stores but left the heavy Artillery in it & evacuated it on the night of the 17th of Novr.—The same night the enemy landed about 3000 of their troops five miles above the fort,—& abt. the same number at Hackinsack (a River running past there)—marched those two bodys across with a design to hem our people in before they had left the fort—they then went & took possession of the fort.—Thus were both Fort Washington & Fort Lee reduced—they were built opposite each other on the banks of the river Hudson, where it was narrow, & a *Chivauxdefrieze* together with the hulks of old vessell sunk across the river to Stop the passage of Shiping, but on the forts being given up, the Chivauxdefrieses were render'd useless, which was the last effort we have try'd to impede the course of the ships—much dependance having been placed on the fire Craft & them & large sums expended in preparing them—but they have both disappointed us without answering any end except the burning one tender for the enemy by the fire Craft in the river.—

Our Army posted themselves across from Newark to the River—

The Amn. army surprised a body of the enemy at Trenton, N. Jersey & captured 800 or 900 hessians.—

Two days after we attacked a body of the british at Princetown: & after a sharp acttion took 4 or 500 prisoners.

This closed the year in this department.

In the autumn previous—Genl. Montgomery had marched from New York at the head of about troops to proceed on to Quebec, it being known that the town contained a large quantity of military stores of all kinds, which were much wanted by the amn. army—and the garrison weak.

Majr. Henly & Majr. Hatfield taken prisoner—This

Another body of about 1500 moved from near Boston under command of Genl. Arnold to join Montgomery at Quebec and when joined to assault the place: which they did on the night of the last of December, but were repulsed with the loss of Genl. Montgomery killed, with a considerable number of men, and a number made prisoners.

Was filled with important transactions.

the british capturing fort Montgomery and we capturing Burgoyne's Army—and in Novr. the enemy took Philadelphia.

Through November no particular action took place the british army pressing forward, in New Jersey, & the Amn. army falling back.

Decr. 25 & 26—capture of the Hessians at Trenton & the british at Princeton.—I was not present at either.

Commenced with great exertions on our part to raise a permanent army—British in a very high ex-

hulting state. the first of our army regularly taking the field—at Bound brook—N. Jersey.—the British at N Brunswick: their outposts extending some distance out.

Amn. army was posted on the Southern side of the range of hills between the village of bound brook & scotch plains the front Southward towards the enemy: Genl. Grey with about 3 or 4,000 made a circuitous movement to turn our left flank: general W. had advanced a strong body of troops in that quarter, with two field pieces—Genl. Lord Stirling as officer of the day had the command a brisk action ensued, which lasted but a short time when our troops fell back and occupied the pass in the hills; the rest of the troops moved to join them—but the enemy did not proceed to attack them in that post. This a most critical time for our general cause.

important movements in the Northern department. Burgoyne with a strong army pressing down Southward: ours retreating before him, but reinforced by a general rally of the militia: a strong detachment of the enemy under Col. Baum defeated & mostly made prisoners at the battle of Bennington.

battle at Bemas heighths

Another severe battle near Seratoga—enemy defeated.

Burgoyne's army surrended.

At the south—

Octr. the british under command of Genl. Clinton move from New York up the river: capture fort Montgomery; burn Eusopus & other places. On hearing of the capture of Burgoyne move down the river again to N York:

thence proceed by shiping to Philadelphia, which surrenders to them, after the battle of Brandewyne.

Our main army passed the winter at Valley forge near Philadelphia.

The first Connt. brigade remained in the middle department & built hutts in the highlands.

Those troops of the middle department under the command of Genl. Putnam went on to West Point & began to collect materials to fortify it: Kosiesco engineer. Our regiment continued there till June following.

The British main army moved from Philadelphia across New Jersey towards New York. Our army attacked them at Monmouth the 28th of June.

nothing decisive.

News of the treaty between France & the United states made last February much raised our spirits.

The british army after arriving at New York— did not attempt any thing considerable the rest of the year.

Wyllys' regiment & the rest of the 1st Connt. brigade were kept in the middle department principally during the rest of the year. And in Decr. went to Reading in Connt. where they built hutts & continued thro' the winter.

The enemy detached a strong body of their army to act against Charleston S. C.

The enemy advanced up the Hudson river & took from us Stoney Point &c.

A detachment of the enemy under Genl. Tryon made a descent on the coast of Connecticut: plundered the town of New Haven: plundered & burnt the towns of Fairfield and Norwalk.

At night our light infantry under command of Genl. Wayne stormed stoney point, made prisoners of 1 Lieut. Col. 30 other officers & 500 men, with the loss of 14 kill'd & 50 wounded: this occasioned the plundering party on our coast to return to N York.

War declared by Spain against England.

Our army moved to Morristown N J.—head quarters at Kimball's farm—built log hutts—remained there during the winter which was very severe—suffered much for want of provision.

left our winter cantonments & marched to the vicinity of Amboy & New Brunswick—observing the movements of the enemy.

marched & countermarched the remainder of the year.

Genl. Lafayette—who had marched the 18th of Feby. from the main army towards Virginia with about 1200 or 1500 men having arrived & entering the town of Richmond on James river—towards which the british were advancing with about 1500 men—they learning that our troops were there—returned to their former station near the mouth of the river.

Genl. Green arrived before Cambden but finding the place too strong to attack moved back about a mile from the town & occupied an eminence expecting the enemy to sally out and attack him, which they did on the 25th & obliged Genl. Green to retreat with the loss of 1 Capt. & 17 rank & file kill'd: & 2 Lt. Col. 2 Capt. & 3 Lieut. wounded & about 200 privates wounded & missing.

March 15 a small action happened between the french fleet consisting of 6 ships of the line & 4 frigates—commanded by
and a detachment of the english fleet consisting of 7 ships of the line & 3 frigates commanded by
at the mouth of cheasopeake bay in Virginia: the action continued an hour—in which the french lost one Officer killed: and eighty privates killed & 120 wounded. The english lost one Officer & 40 privates killed and 80 wounded.

the english having established a post at Portsmouth on the bay, and having but a small naval force to co-operate with it—the french—then at Newport embarked 2000 of their land troops and sail'd with an intention to opperate in conjunction with the Marquess De La Feyatte who march'd from the American Army for Virginia—with 1100 light infantry—against the english garrison at that place, then commanded by General Arnold:

The english fleet sailing immidiately after the french and not having to make so great an offing in passing New York as the french—arrived at the bay before them: the action happening near night—the english took advantage of the night & went into the bay: on which the french returned to New Port.

March 16th. A severe action happened between General Green & Lord Cornwallis near Guilford Court House in

General Green's small army consisted of about 1400 regular troops & about 2000 militia of Virginia & North Carolina with which he attacked the english army consisting of 2500 regulars.—Greene was defeated with the loss of Major Anderson, Captn. Barret & about 90 killed & 200 wounded: four pieces of artillery fell into the enemy's hands with all the wounded.

The enemy having met with a severe loss, did not pursue.

Greene retreated three miles in good order to where his baggage had remainded during the action.

The enemy's loss in this action was so severe that without attempting to pursue the advantages they before hoped to have gained by a victory—they immediately began a retreat towards Charlestown South Carolina,—where Greene pursued them.

Genl. Marion reduced fort Watson & made prisoners 3 officers & 100 Rank & file.

Fort Mott reduced.

The post at Orangeburgh reduced.

Maryland having fully acceded to the articles of Confederation—that being the last State which has hitherto neglected to do it—the confederation was finally closed, by which Congress has fully become a legislative body.

By the United States in Congress Assembled March 16, 1781.

Resolved that all debts due from the United States which have been liquidated in spcie [sic] value; and all debts which have been, or shall be made payable

General Washington marched from his winter cantonments in the highlands—& took post in Philipsburgh: the four French regiments & the ligion which had been lying at New Port arrived there at the same time & encamped on the left of the American line. Some skirmishing happened between the advanced parties of both the English & Americans—the loss on each side was about 60; without any Officers.—

An action happened between Admiral H. Parker with 7 ships; & a dutch squadron of 8 ships—in the English Seas—it lasted near 4 hours very severe; the English owned the loss of 443 & it appears they were worsted—for after the action the dutch with their large convoy proceeded to the Texell.

General Washington with the French line & two regiments of Americans crossed the Hudson at Kings Ferry & moved on southward.

Count DeBarras with eight ships of the line & frigates sailed from New Port to join the fleet of Count DeGrasse bound from the West Indies to the bay of Cheaseapeake.

Admiral De Grasse arrived with 28 ships of the line & frigates in the bay of Cheasepeake & sent two 64 Gun ships to shut in General Cornwallis at Yorktown on York River: on their arrival an English 22 gun ship fell into their hands.

Three thousand land forces were landed from the fleet to operate with the Marquess DLa Feyatte against Cornwallis.

Brigadier General Arnold with two twenty gun ships, 40 transports & a detachment of about 1,500 troops made a descent at New London in Connecticut. About 130 of the inhabitants flung themselves into a small fort on the east side of the harbour—which the English attacked and after being

twice repulsed—carried by storm & the Garrison fell a sacrifice; all but about 20, 75 being killed dead, among the latter was Col. Ledyard of the militia. The enemy lost Col. Airs, Majors Stewart & Montgomery & fifty odd killed.

the towns of New London & Groton were then pillaged & burnt & about 20 vessells in the harbour.

An action happened off Cape Henry in Virginia between the French fleet, consisting of 24 Sail of the line commanded by Count De Grasse And the English fleet consisting of 18 ships of the line commanded by Admiral Greaves.

An action was fought between General Greene and the British forces under the command of Col. Stewart—at Eutaw 53 miles distant from Charles town in South Carolinia [sic]. Greene defeated the English, killed & wounded 600 & took 500 prisoners: with the loss of 500 killed & wounded & 42 missing: Lieut. Col Campbell was the highest in rank killed.

The enemy fled to Charlestown.

REVOLUTIONARY RECOLLECTIONS.

Battle of Bunker Hill.

Altho' this has been so often described, it is presumed a recollection of the scenes of the 17th of June 1775 will be felt with interest by the few re-

maining survivors of that day, as well as by those of the present generation.

At day break the road on Boston neck appeared fill'd with the enemy moving out from the town; this though a feint, designed to attract our attention from the real object, caused our instantly repairing to our *alarm post,* which was on the swell of the hill in Roxbury: as we were forming for the expected attack the enemy poured a heavy and constant discharge of shott & shells from all their batteries which would reach us.

By sun rise their troops appeared moving back, and the real object of the day discovered itself—the landing of their army on Charlestown side, which was covered by a tremendous fire from their ships, floating batteries, and all their works which could be brought to bear on our troops who wer [sic] entrenching themselves on Bunker hill. It is well known that a soldier has nothing to do but to obey his orders. My position was a most painful one: being on the hill in Roxbury from whence I could see all the general movements without the opportunity of sharing in the most active parts. every *real soldier* knows the extreme solicitude felt on such an occasion. As the scene progressed I saw the enemy advancing up the hill, heard the roar of musketry commence, the dense body of smoke ascending, by which I saw the enemy three times retreating before the deadly fire of our brave defenders of their country's rights. Burgoyne in his letter has drawn a veil over

this—but the arrival of the reinforcement of the 2,000 fresh troops completely turned the scale, as they moved to the left of our entrenchment and enfiladed it.

Col. Grosvenor who performed a very active part on that day described to me many striking incidents which occurred during the bustle of battle: such as Major Pitcairn of the marines mounting the top of the ditch and exclaiming *disperse ye rebels;* when one of our men instantly shot him thro' and he fell in the ditch. A soldier just by the side of General Putnam had levelled his gun at Major Small, aid de camp to Genl. Howe, on which Putnam struck it aside with his sword saying *dont kill that man I love him as I do my brother.* Col. Trumbull told me Genl. Small repeated this to him in London, with tears in his eyes. I little thought on that day of the important results which were to be produced by it in this our favoured country: thro' Europe and the whole civilized world.

The subjoined letter of Genl. Burgoyne will be read with deep interest. The return of this 4th of July has refreshed those things in my mind. R.

Extract of a private letter written by Genl. Burgoyne.

Boston is a peninsula joined to the main land only by a narrow neck, which in the first of the troubles Genl. Gage fortified; arms of the sea and harbor surround the rest. On the other side of one of these

arms to the North is Charles Town, or rather, was, for it is now rubbish, and over it a large hill which is also, like Boston, a peninsula. to the South of the town is a still larger scope of ground, containing three hills, joining also to the main by a tongue of land, and called Dorchester neck. The heights above described, both to North & South, in the soldier's phrase, commanded the town—i. e.—give an opportunity of erecting batteries above any you can make against them, and consequently they are much more advantageous. It was absolutely necessary we should make ourselves masters of these heights, and we proposed to begin with Dorchester: because from particular situations of batteries and shiping—too long to describe and unintelligible to you if I did—it would evidently be effected without any considerable loss.

Every thing was accordingly disposed. my two colleagues & myself—who by the bye have never differed in an iota of miletary sentiment—had in soncert with Genl. Gage formed the plan. Howe was to land from transports on one point, Clinton on the center, and I was to cannonade from the causeway on the neck, each to take advantage from circumstances. The operation must have been very wary. This was to have been executed on the 18th (June) On the 17th at dawn of day we found the enemy had pushed entrenchments with great diligence during the night—on the heights of Charles Town, were there in force, & we evidently saw that every hour

gave them new strength. it therefore became necessary to alter our plan and attack on that side. Howe as second in command was detached with about 2000 men and landed on the outside of the peninsula covered by shiping, without opposition. he was to advance from thence up the hill which was over Charlestown, where the strength of the enemy lay: He had under him Brigadier general Pigot.

Clinton & myself took our stand (for we had not a fixed post) in a large battery directly opposite to Charlestown, and commanding it, & also reaching to the heights above it, and thereby facilitating Howe's attack. Howes disposition was extremely soldier like; in my opinion it was perfect. As his first line advanced up the hill they met with a thousand impediments, from strong fences, & wer [sic] much exposed. They were also exceedingly hurt by musquetry from the town of Charlestown; though Clinton & I did not perceive it till Howe sent us word by a boat, and desired us to set fire to the town. No sooner said than done. we threw in a parcell of shells and the whole was instantly in flames. Our battery afterwards kept an incessant fire upon the height. it was seconded by a number of frigates & floating batteries, & one ship of the line.

And now ensued one of the greatest scenes of war that can be conceived. if we looked to the right, Howe's corps ascending the hill in the face of intrenchments, and in very disadvantageous ground, warmly engaged: to the left—the enemy pouring in

fresh troops by thousands over the land: and in the arm of the sea, our ships & floating batteries cannonading them. straight before us a large & noble town in one great blaze, the church steeples, being all of timber, were great pyramids of fire above the rest: behind us the church steeples & heights & our own camp covered with spectators of the rest of our army which was disengaged: The hills all round the country crouded with spectators of the enemy, all in anxious suspense.

(Endorsed) Bunker hill
1775.

AT the close of the war Captain Richards returned to Farmington, Conn., and served as postmaster for twenty years. He married Sarah Welles, of Glastenbury, Conn., daughter of Jonathan Welles and Katherine Saltonstall. Their daughter Cornelia married John Lord Butler, and lived in Wilkes-Barre, Pa. Captain Richards removed to Wilkes-Barre and lived there to be 87 years old. He is buried in the Hollenback Cemetery near Colonel Zebulon Butler, his comrade in arms and father of his son-in-law. He was a member of the Society of the Cincinnati.

CARRY ON

LETTERS IN WAR-TIME

BY

CONINGSBY DAWSON
NOVELIST AND SOLDIER

WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND NOTES
BY HIS FATHER, W. J. DAWSON

NEW YORK: JOHN LANE COMPANY
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1917 official photograph of Lieutenant Coningsby Dawson
Courtesy of Nancy Hanks Lincoln Public Library

WHEN THE WAR'S AT AN END

At length when the war's at an end
And we're just ourselves,—you and I,
And we gather our lives up to mend,
We, who've learned how to live and to die:

Shall we think of the old ambition
For riches, or how to grow wise,
When, like Lazarus freshly arisen,
We've the presence of Death in our eyes?

Shall we dream of our old life's passion,—
To toil for our heart's desire,
Whose souls War has taken to fashion
With molten death and with fire?

I think we shall crave the laughter
Of the wind through trees gold with the sun,
When our strife is all finished,—after
The carnage of War is done.

Just these things will then seem worth while:—
How to make Life more wondrously sweet;
How to live with a song and a smile;
How to lay our lives at Love's feet.

ERIC P. DAWSON,
Sub. Lieut. R. N. V. R.

INTRODUCTION

THE letters in this volume were not written for publication. They are intimate and personal in a high degree. They would not now be published by those to whom they are addressed, had they not come to feel that the spirit and temper of the writer might do something to strengthen and invigorate those who, like himself, are called on to make great sacrifices for high causes and solemn duties.

They do not profess to give any new information about the military operations of the Allies; this is the task of the publicist, and at all times is forbidden to the soldier in the field. Here and there some striking or significant fact has been allowed to pass the censor; but the value of the letters does not lie in these things. It is found rather in the record of how the dreadful yet heroic realities of war affect an unusually sensitive mind, long trained in moral and romantic idealism; the process by which this mind adapts itself to unanticipated and incredible conditions, to acts and duties which lie close to horror, and are only saved from being horrible by the efficacy

of the spiritual effort which they evoke. Hating the brutalities of War, clearly perceiving the wide range of its cruelties, yet the heart of the writer is never hardened by its daily commerce with death; it is purified by pity and terror, by heroism and sacrifice, until the whole nature seems fresh annealed into a finer strength.

The intimate nature of these letters makes it necessary to say something about the writer.

Coningsby Dawson graduated with honours in history from Oxford in 1905, and in the same year came to the United States with the intention of taking a theological course at Union Seminary. After a year at the Seminary he reached the conclusion that his true lifework lay in literature, and he at once began to fit himself for his vocation. In the meantime his family left England, and we had made our home in Taunton, Massachusetts. Here, in a quiet house, amid lawns and leafy elms, he gave himself with indefatigable ardour to the art of writing. He wrote from seven to ten hours a day, producing many poems, short stories, and three novels. Few writers have ever worked harder to attain literary excellence, or have practised a more austere devotion to their art. I often marvelled how a young man, fresh from a brilliant career at the greatest of English Universities, could be content

with a life that was so widely separated from association with men and affairs. I wondered still more at the patience with which he endured the rebuffs that always await the beginner in literature, and the humility with which he was willing to learn the hard lessons of his apprenticeship in literary form. The secret lay, no doubt, in his secure sense of a vocation, and his belief that good work could not fail in the end to justify itself. But, not the less, these four years of obscure drudgery wore upon his spirit, and hence some of the references in these letters to his days of self-despising. The period of waiting came to an end at last with the publication in 1913 of his *Garden Without Walls,* which attained immediate success. When he speaks in these letters of his brief burst of fame, he refers to those crowded months in the Fall of 1913, when his novel was being discussed on every hand, and, for the first time, he met many writers of established reputation as an equal.

Another novel, *The Raft,* followed *The Garden Without Walls.* The nature of his life now seemed fixed. To the task of novel-writing he had brought a temperament highly idealistic and romantic, a fresh and vivid imagination, and a thorough literary equipment. His life, as he planned it, held but one purpose for him, outside

the warmth and tenacity of its affections—the triumph of the efficient purpose in the adequate expression of his mind in literature. The austerity of his long years of preparation had left him relatively indifferent to the common prizes of life, though they had done nothing to lessen his intense joy in life. His whole mind was concentrated on his art. His adventures would be the adventures of the mind in search of ampler modes of expression. His crusades would be the crusades of the spirit in search of the realities of truth. He had received the public recognition which gave him faith in himself and faith in his ability to achieve the reputation of the true artist, whose work is not cheapened but dignified and broadened by success. So he read the future, and so his critics read it for him. And then, sudden and unheralded, there broke on this quiet life of intellectual devotion the great storm of 1914. The guns that roared along the Marne shattered all his purposes, and left him face to face with a solemn spiritual exigency which admitted no equivocation.

At first, in common with multitudes more experienced than himself, he did not fully comprehend the true measure of the cataclysm which had overwhelmed the world. There had been wars before, and they had been fought out by

standing armies. It was incredible that any war should last more than a few months. Again and again the world had been assured that war would break down with its own weight, that no war could be financed beyond a certain brief period, that the very nature of modern warfare, with its terrible engines of destruction, made swift decisions a necessity. The conception of a British War which involved the entire manhood of the nation was new, and unparalleled in past history. And the further conception of a war so vast in its issues that it really threatened the very existence of the nation was new too. Alarmists had sometimes predicted these things, but they had been disbelieved. Historians had used such phrases of long past struggles, but often as a mode of rhetoric rather than as the expression of exact truth. Yet, in a very few weeks, it became evident that not alone England, but the entire fabric of liberal civilisation was threatened by a power that knew no honour, no restraints of either caution or magnanimity, no ethic but the armed might that trampled under blood-stained feet all the things which the common sanction of centuries held dearest and fairest.

Perhaps, if Coningsby had been resident in England, these realities of the situation would

have been immediately apparent. Residing in America, the real outlines of the struggle were a little dimmed by distance. Nevertheless, from the very first he saw clearly where his duty lay. He could not enlist immediately. He was bound in honour to fulfil various literary obligations. His latest book, *Slaves of Freedom,* was in process of being adapted for serial use, and its publication would follow. He set the completion of this work as the period when he must enlist; working on with difficult self-restraint toward the appointed hour. If he had regrets for a career broken at the very point where it had reached success and was assured of more than competence, he never expressed them. His one regret was the effect of his enlistment on those most closely bound to him by affections which had been deepened and made more tender by the sense of common exile. At last the hour came when he was free to follow the imperative call of patriotic duty. He went to Ottawa, saw Sir Sam Hughes, and was offered a commission in the Canadian Field Artillery on the completion of his training at the Royal Military College, at Kingston, Ontario. The last weeks of his training were passed at the military camp of Petewawa on the Ottawa River. There his family was able to meet him in the July of 1916. While

we were with him he was selected, with twenty-four other officers, for immediate service in France; and at the same time his two younger brothers enlisted in the Naval Patrol, then being recruited in Canada by Commander Armstrong.

The letters in this volume commence with his departure from Ottawa. Week by week they have come, with occasional interruptions; mud-stained epistles, written in pencil, in dug-outs by the light of a single candle, in the brief moments snatched from hard and perilous duties. They give no hint of where he was on the far-flung battle-line. We know now that he was at Albert, at Thiepval, at Courcelette, and at the taking of the Regina trench, where, unknown to him, one of his cousins fell in the heroic charge of the Canadian infantry. His constant thoughtfulness for those who were left at home is manifest in all he writes. It has been expressed also in other ways, dear and precious to remember: in flowers delivered by his order from the battlefield each Sabbath morning at our house in Newark, in cables of birthday congratulations, which arrived on the exact date. Nothing has been forgotten that could alleviate the loneliness of our separation, or stimulate our courage, or make us conscious of the unbroken bond of love.

The general point of view in these letters is, I

think, adequately expressed in the phrase *"Carry On,"* which I have used as the title of this book. It was our happy lot to meet Coningsby in London in the January of the present year, when he was granted ten days' leave. In the course of conversation one night he laid emphasis on the fact that he, and those who served with him, were, after all, not professional soldiers, but civilians at war. They did not love war, and when the war was ended not five per cent of them would remain in the army. They were men who had left professions and vocations which still engaged the best parts of their minds, and would return to them when the hour came. War was for them an occupation, not a vocation. Yet they had proved themselves, one and all, splendid soldiers, bearing the greatest hardships without complaint, and facing wounds and death with a gay courage which had made the Canadian forces famous even among a host of men, equally brave and heroic. The secret of their fortitude lay in the one brief phrase, "Carry On." Their fortitude was of the spirit rather than the nerves. They were aware of the solemn ideals of justice, liberty, and righteousness for which they fought, and would never give up till they were won. In the completeness of their surrender to a great cause they had been lifted out of themselves to

a new plane of living by the transformation of their spirit. It was the dogged indomitable drive of spiritual forces controlling bodily forces. Living or dying those forces would prevail. They would carry on to the end, however long the war, and would count no sacrifice too great to assure its triumph.

This is the spirit which breathes through these letters. The splendour of war, as my son puts it, is in nothing external; it is all in the souls of the men. "There's a marvellous grandeur about all this carnage and desolation—men's souls rise above the distress—they have to, in order to survive." "Every man I have met out here has the amazing guts to wear his crown of thorns as though it were a cap-and-bells." They have shredded off their weaknesses, and attained that "corporate stout-heartedness" which is "the acme of what Aristotle meant by virtue." For himself, he discovers that the plague of his former modes of life lay in self-distrust. It was the disease of the age. The doubt of many things which it were wisdom to believe had ended in the doubt of one's own capacity for heroism. All those doubts and self-despisings had vanished in the supreme surrender to sacrificial duty. The doors of the Kingdom of Heroism were flung so wide that the meanest might enter in, and in that act the

humblest became comrades of Drake's men, who could jest as they died. No one knows his real strength till it is put to the test; the highest joy of life is to discover that the soul can meet the test, and survive it.

The Somme battlefield, from which all these letters were despatched, is an Inferno much more terrible than any Dante pictured. It is a vast sea of mud, full of the unburied dead, pitted and pock-marked by shell-holes, treeless and houseless, "the abomination of desolation." And the men who toil across it look more like outcasts of the London Embankment than soldiers. "They're loaded down like pack-animals, their shoulders are rounded, they're wearied to death, but they go on and go on. . . . There's no flash of sword or splendour of uniforms. They're only very tired men determined to carry on. The war will be won by tired men who can never again pass an insurance test." Yet they carry on—the "broken counter-jumper, the ragged ex-plumber," the clerk from the office, the man from the farm; Londoner, Canadian, Australian, New Zealander, men drawn from every quarter of the Empire, who daily justify their manhood by devotion to an ideal and by contempt of death. And in the heart of each there is a settled conviction that the cause for which they have sacrificed so

much must triumph. They have no illusions about an early peace. They see their comrades fall, and say quietly, "He's gone West." They do heroic things daily, which in a lesser war would have won the Victoria Cross, but in this war are commonplaces. They know themselves re-born in soul, and are dimly aware that the world is travailing toward new birth with them. They are still very human, men who end their letters with a row of crosses which stand for kisses. They are not dehumanised by war; the kindliness and tenderness of their natures are unspoiled by all their daily traffic in horror. But they have won their souls; and when the days of peace return these men will take with them to the civilian life a tonic strength and nobleness which will arrest and extirpate the decadence of society with the saving salt of valour and of faith.

It may be said also that they do not hate their foe, although they hate the things for which he fights. They are fighting a clean fight, with men whose courage they respect. A German prisoner who comes into the British camp is sure of good treatment. He is neither starved nor insulted. His captors share with him cheerfully their rations and their little luxuries. Sometimes a sullen brute will spit in the face of his captor when he offers him a cigarette; he is always an officer,

never a private. And occasionally between these fighting hosts there are acts of magnanimity which stand out illumined against the dark background of death and suffering. One of the stories told me by my son illustrates this. During one fierce engagement a British officer saw a German officer impaled on the barbed wire, writhing in anguish. The fire was dreadful, yet he still hung there unscathed. At length the British officer could stand it no longer. He said quietly, "I can't bear to look at that poor chap any longer." So he went out under the hail of shell, released him, took him on his shoulders and carried him to the German trench. The firing ceased. Both sides watched the act with wonder. Then the Commander in the German trench came forward, took from his own bosom the Iron Cross, and pinned it on the breast of the British officer. Such an episode is true to the holiest ideals of chivalry; and it is all the more welcome because the German record is stained by so many acts of barbarism, which the world cannot forgive.

This magnanimous attitude toward the enemy is very apparent in these letters. The man whose mind is filled with great ideals of sacrifice and duty has no room for the narrowness of hate. He can pity a foe whose sufferings ex-

ceed his own, and the more so because he knows that his foe is doomed. The British troops do know this to-day by many infallible signs. In the early days of the war untrained men, poorly equipped with guns, were pitted against the best trained troops in Europe. The first Canadian armies were sacrificed, as was that immortal army of Imperial troops who saved the day at Mons. The Canadians often perished in that early fighting by the excess of their own reckless bravery. They are still the most daring fighters in the British army, but they have profited by the hard discipline of the past. They know now that they have not only the will to conquer, but the means of conquest. Their artillery has become conspicuous for its efficiency. It is the ceaseless artillery fire which has turned the issue of the war for the British forces. The work of the infantry is beyond praise. They "go over the top" with superb courage, and all who have seen them are ready to say with my son, "I'm hats off to the infantry." And in this final efficiency, surpassing all that could have been thought possible in the earlier stages of the war, the British forces read the clear augury of victory. The war will be won by the Allied armies; not only because they fight for the better cause, which counts for much, in spite of Napoleon's

cynical saying that "God is on the side of the strongest battalions"; but because at last they have superiority in equipment, discipline and efficiency. Upon that shell-torn Western front, amid the mud and carnage of the Somme, there has been slowly forged the weapon which will drive the Teuton enemy across the Rhine, and give back to Europe and the world unhindered liberty and enduring peace.

W. J. DAWSON.

March, 1917.

THE LETTERS

In order to make some of the allusions in these letters clear I will set down briefly the circumstances which explain them, and supply a narrative link where it may be required.

I have already mentioned the Military Camp at Petewawa, on the Ottawa river. The Camp is situated about seven miles from Pembroke. The Ottawa river is at this point a beautiful lake. Immediately opposite the Camp is a little summer hotel of the simplest description. It was at this hotel that my wife, my daughter, and myself stayed in the early days of July, 1916.

The hotel was full of the wives of the officers stationed in the Camp. During the daytime I was the only man among the guests. About five o'clock in the afternoon the officers from the Camp began to arrive on a primitive motor ferry-boat. My son came over each day, and we often visited him at the Camp. His long training at Kingston had been very severe. It included besides the various classes which he attended a great deal of hard exercise, long rides or foot marches over frozen roads before breakfast, and so forth.

After this strenuous winter the Camp at Petewawa was a delightful change. His tent stood on a bluff, commanding an exquisite view of the broad stretch of water, diversified by many small islands. We had a great deal of swimming in the lake, and several motor-boat excursions to its beautiful upper reaches. One afternoon when we went over in our launch to meet him at the Camp wharf, he told us that that day a General had come from Ottawa to ask for twenty-five picked officers to supply the casualties among the Canadian Field Artillery at the front. He had immediately volunteered and been accepted.

At this time my two younger sons, who had joined us at Petewawa in order to see their brother, enrolled themselves in the Royal Naval Motor Patrol Service, and had to return to Nelson, British Columbia, to settle their affairs. Near Nelson, on the Kootenay Lake, we have a large fruit ranch, managed by my second son, Reginald. My youngest son, Eric, was with a law-firm in Nelson, and had just passed his final examinations as solicitor and barrister.

This ranch had played a great part in our lives. The scenery is among the finest in British Columbia. We usually spent our summers there, finding not only continual interest in the

development of our orchards, but a great deal of pleasure in riding, swimming, and boating. We had often talked of building a modern house there, but had never done so. The original "little shack" was the work of Reginald's own hands, in the days when most of the ranch was primeval forest. It had been added to, but was still of the simplest description. One reason why we had not built a modern house was that this "little shack" had become much endeared to us by association and memory. We were all together there more than once, and Coningsby had written a great deal there. We built later on a sort of summer library—a big room on the edge of a beautiful ravine—to which reference is made in later letters. Some of the happiest days of our lives were spent in these lovely surroundings, and the memory of those blue summer days, amid the fragrance of miles of pine-forest, often recurs to Coningsby as he writes from the mud-wastes of the Somme.

We left Petewawa to go to the ranch before Coningsby sailed for England, that we might get our other two sons ready for their journey to England. They left us on August 21st, and the ranch was sub-let to Chinamen in the end of September, when we returned to Newark, New Jersey.

CARRY ON

I

OTTAWA, July 16th, 1916.

DEAREST ALL:

So much has happened since last I saw you that it's difficult to know where to start. On Thursday, after lunch, I got the news that we were to entrain from Petewawa next Friday morning. I at once put in for leave to go to Ottawa the next day until the following Thursday at reveille. We came here with a lot of the other officers who are going over and have been having a very full time.

I am sailing from a port unknown on board the *Olympic* with 6,000 troops—there is to be a big convoy. I feel more than ever I did—and I'm sure it's a feeling that you share since visiting the camp—that I am setting out on a Crusade from which it would have been impossible to withhold myself with honour. I go quite gladly and contentedly, and pray that in God's good time we may all sit again in the little shack at Kootenay and listen to the rustling of the or-

chard outside. It will be of those summer days that I shall be thinking all the time.

Yours, with very much love,

CON.

II

HALIFAX, July 23rd.

MY DEAR ONES:

We've spent all morning on the dock, seeing to our baggage, and have just got leave ashore for two hours. We have had letters handed to us saying that on no account are we to mention anything concerning our passage overseas, neither are we allowed to cable our arrival from the other side until four clear days have elapsed.

You are thinking of me this quiet Sunday morning at the ranch, and I of you. And I am wishing—— As I wish, I stop and ask myself, "Would I be there if I could have my choice?" And I remember those lines of Emerson's which you quoted:

> "Though love repine and reason chafe,
> There comes a voice without reply,
> 'Twere man's perdition to be safe,
> When for the Truth he ought to die."

I wouldn't turn back if I could, but my heart cries out against "the voice which speaks without reply."

Things are growing deeper with me in all sorts of ways. Family affections stand out so desirably and vivid, like meadows green after rain. And religion means more. The love of a few dear human people and the love of the divine people out of sight, are all that one has to lean on in the graver hours of life. I hope I come back again—I very much hope I come back again; there are so many finer things that I could do with the rest of my days—bigger things. But if by any chance I should cross the seas to stay, you'll know that that also will be right and as big as anything that I could do with life, and something that you'll be able to be just as proud about as if I had lived to fulfil all your other dear hopes for me. I don't suppose I shall talk of this again. But I wanted you to know that underneath all the lightness and ambition there's something that I learnt years ago in Highbury. * I've become a little child again in God's hands, with full confidence in His love and wisdom, and a growing trust that whatever He decides for me will be best and kindest.

This is the last letter I shall be able to send to you before the other boys follow me. Keep

*We resided over thirteen years at Highbury, London, N., during my pastorate of the Highbury Quadrant Congregational Church.

brave, dear ones, for all our sakes; don't let any of us turn cowards whatever ultimately happens. We've a tradition to live up to now that we have become a family of soldiers and sailors.

I shall long for the time when you come over to England. Where will our meeting be and when? Perhaps the war may be ended and then won't you be glad that we dared all this sorrow of good-byes?

God bless and keep you,

CON.

III

ON BOARD,
July 27th, 1916.

MY VERY DEAR PEOPLE:

Here we are scooting along across the same old Atlantic we've crossed so many times on journeys of pleasure. I'm at a loss to make my letters interesting, as we are allowed to say little concerning the voyage and everything is censored.

There are men on board who are going back to the trenches for the second time. One of them is a captain in the Princess Pat's, who is badly scarred in his neck and cheek and thighs, and has been in Canada recuperating. There is also a young flying chap who has also seen ser-

vice. They are all such boys and so plucky in the face of certain knowledge.

This morning I woke up thinking of our motor-tour of two years ago in England, and especially of our first evening at *The Three Cups* in Dorset. I feel like running down there to see it all again if I get any leave on landing. How strange it will be to go back to Highbury again like this! The little boy who ran back and forth to school down Paradise Row little thought of the person who to-day masquerades as his elder self.

Heigho! I wish I could tell you a lot of things that I'm not allowed to. This letter would be much more interesting then.

In seventeen days the boys will also have left you—so this will arrive when you're horribly lonely. I'm so sorry for you dear people—but I'd be sorrier for you if we were all with you. If I were a father or mother, I'd rather have my sons dead than see them failing when the supreme sacrifice was called for. I marvel all the time at the prosaic and even coarse types of men who have risen to the greatness of the occasion. And there's not a man aboard who would have chosen the job ahead of him. One man here used to pay other people to kill his pigs because he couldn't endure the cruelty of

doing it himself. And now he's going to kill men. And he's a sample. I wonder if there is a Lord God of Battles—or is he only an invention of man and an excuse for man's own actions.

Monday.

We are just in—safely arrived in spite of everything. I hope you had no scare reports of our having been sunk—such reports often get about when a big troop ship is on the way.

I'm baggage master for my draft, and have to get on deck now. You'll have a long letter from me soon.

Good-bye,

Yours ever,

Con.

IV

Shorncliff, August 19th, 1916.

My Dearests:

We haven't had any hint of what is going to happen to us—whether Field Artillery, the Heavies or trench mortars. There seems little doubt that we are to be in England for a little while taking special courses.

I read father's letter yesterday. You are very brave—you never thought that you would be the father of a soldier and sailors; and, as you say,

there's a kind of tradition about the way in which the fathers of soldiers and sailors should act. Confess—aren't you more honestly happy to be our father as we are now than as we were? I know quite well you are, in spite of the loneliness and heartache. We've all been forced into a heroism of which we did not think ourselves capable. We've been carried up to the Calvary of the world where it is expedient that a few men should suffer that all the generations to come may be better.

I understand in a dim way all that you suffer —the sudden divorce of all that we had hoped for from the present—the ceaseless questionings as to what lies ahead. Your end of the business is the worse. For me, I can go forward steadily because of the greatness of the glory. I never thought to have the chance to suffer in my body for other men. The insufficiency of merely setting nobilities down on paper is finished. How unreal I seem to myself! Can it be true that I am here and you are in the still aloofness of the Rockies? I think the multitude of my changes has blunted my perceptions. I trudge along like a traveller between high hedgerows; my heart is blinkered so that I am scarcely aware of landscapes. My thoughts are always with you—I make calculations for the differences of time that

I may follow more accurately your doings. I'd love to come down to the study summer-house and watch the blueness of the lake with you—I love those scenes and memories more than any in the world.

Good-bye for the present. Be brave.

Yours,

Con.

V

SHORNCLIFF, August 19th, 1916.

MY DEARS:

It's not quite three weeks to-day since I came to England, and it seems ages. The first week was spent on leave, the second I passed my exams in gun drill and gun-laying, and this week I have finished my riding. Next Monday I start on my gunnery.

Do you remember Captain S. at the Camp? I had his young brother to dinner with me last night—he's just back from France minus an eye. He lasted three and a half weeks, and was buried four feet deep by a shell. He's a jolly boy, as cheerful as you could want and is very good company. He gave me a vivid description. He had a great boy-friend. At the start of the war they both joined, S. in the Artillery, his

friend in the Mounted Rifles. At parting they exchanged identification tokens. S.'s bore his initials and the one word "Violets"—which meant that they were his favourite flower and he would like to have some scattered over him when he was buried. His friend wore his initials and the words "No flowers by request." It was S.'s first week out—they were advancing, having driven back the enemy, and were taking up a covered position in a wood from which to renew their offensive. It was night, black as pitch, but they knew that the wood must have been the scene of fighting by the scuttling of the rats. Suddenly the moon came out, and from beneath a bush S. saw a face—or rather half a face—which he thought he recognised, gazing up at him. He corrects himself when he tells the story, and says that it wasn't so much the disfigured features as the profile that struck him as familiar. He bent down and searched beneath the shirt, and drew out a little metal disc with "No flowers by request" written on it.

I don't know whether I ought to repeat things like that to you, but the description was so graphic. I have met many who have returned from the Front, and what puzzles me in all of them is their unawed acceptance of death. I don't think I could ever accept it as natural; it's

too discourteous in its interruption of many dreams and plans and loves.

Yours with very much love,

Con.

VI

Shorncliff, August 30th, 1916.

My Dearests:

I have just returned from sending you a cable to let you know that I'm off to France. The word came out in orders yesterday, and I shall leave before the end of the week with a draft of officers—I have been in England just a day over four weeks. My only regret is that I shall miss the boys who should be travelling up to London about the same time as I am setting out for the Front. After I have been there for three months I am supposed to get a leave—this should be due to me about the beginning of December, and you can judge how I shall count on it. Think of the meeting with R. and E., and the immensity of the joy.

Selfishly I wish that you were here at this moment—actually I'm glad that you are away. Everybody goes out quite unemotionally and with very few good-byes—we made far more fuss in the old days about a week-end visit.

Now that at last it has come—this privileged

moment for which I have worked and waited—my heart is very quiet. It's the test of a character which I have often doubted. I shall be glad not to have to doubt it again. Whatever happens, I know you will be glad to remember that at a great crisis I tried to play the man, however small my qualifications. We have always lived so near to one another's affections that this going out alone is more lonely to me than to most men. I have always had some one near at hand with love-blinded eyes to see my faults as springing from higher motives. Now I reach out my hands across six thousand miles and only touch yours with my imagination to say good-bye. What queer sights these eyes, which have been almost your eyes, will witness! If my hands do anything respectable, remember that it is your hands that are doing it. It is your influence as a family that has made me ready for the part I have to play, and where I go, you follow me.

Poor little circle of three loving persons, please be tremendously brave. Don't let anything turn you into cowards—we've all got to be worthy of each other's sacrifice; the greater the sacrifice may prove to be for the one the greater the nobility demanded of the remainder. How idle the words sound, and yet they will take deep meanings when time has given them graver

sanctions. I think gallant is the word I've been trying to find—we must be gallant English women and gentlemen.

It's been raining all day and I got very wet this morning. Don't you wish I had caught some quite harmless sickness? When I didn't want to go back to school, I used to wet my socks purposely in order to catch cold, but the cold always avoided me when I wanted it badly. How far away the childish past seems—almost as though it never happened. And was I really the budding novelist in New York? Life has become so stern and scarlet—and so brave. From my window I look out on the English Channel, a cold, grey-green sea, with rain driving across it and a fleet of small craft taking shelter. Over there beyond the curtain of mist lies France—and everything that awaits me.

News has just come that I have to start. Will continue from France.

Yours ever lovingly,

Con.

VII

Friday, September 1st, 1916, 11 a.m.

DEAREST FATHER AND MOTHER:

I embark at 12.30—so this is the last line before I reach France. I expect the boys are

now within sight of English shores—I wish I could have had an hour with them.

I'm going to do my best to bring you honour—remember that—I shall do things for your sake out there, living up to the standards you have taught me.

Yours with a heart full of love,

Con.

VIII

FRANCE, September 1st, 1916.

DEAREST M.:

Here I am in France with the same strange smells and street cries, and almost the same little boys bowling hoops over the very cobbly cobble stones. I had afternoon tea at a patisserie and ate a great many gâteaux for the sake of old times. We had a very choppy crossing, and you would most certainly have been sick had you been on board. It seemed to me that I must be coming on one of those romantic holidays to see churches and dead history—only the khaki-clad figures reminded me that I was coming to see history in the making. It's a funny world that batters us about so. It's three years since I was in France—the last time was with Arthur in Provence. It's five years since you and I did our famous trip together.

I wish you were here—there are heaps of English nurses in the streets. I expect to sleep in this place and proceed to my destination to-morrow. How I wish I could send you a really descriptive letter! If I did, I fear you would not get it—so I have to write in generalities. None of this seems real—it's a kind of wild pretence from which I shall awake—and when I tell you my dream you'll laugh and say, "How absurd of you, dreaming that you were a soldier. I must say you look like it."

Good-bye, my dearest girl,

God bless you,

Con.

IX

September 8th, 1916.

My Dearest Ones:

I'm sending this to meet you on your return from Kootenay. I left England on September 1st and had a night at my point of disembarkation, and then set off on a wandering adventure in search of my division. I'm sure you'll understand that I cannot enter into any details—I can only give you general and purely personal impressions. There were two other officers with me, both from Montreal. We had to picnic on chocolate and wine for twenty-four

hours through our lack of forethought in not supplying ourselves with food for the trip. I shaved the first morning with water from the exhaust of a railroad engine, having first balanced my mirror on the step. The engineer was fascinated with my safety razor. There were Tommies from the trenches in another train, muddied to the eyes—who showed themselves much more resourceful. They cooked themselves quite admirable meals as they squatted on the rails, over little fires on which they perched tomato cans. Sunday evening we saw our first German prisoners—a young and degenerate-looking lot. Sunday evening we got off at a station in the rain, and shouldered our own luggage. Our luggage, by the way, consists of a sleeping bag, in which much of our stuff is packed, and a kit sack—for an immediate change and toilet articles one carries a haversack hung across the shoulder. Well, as I say, we alighted and coaxed a military wagon to come to our rescue. As we set off through a drizzling rain, trudging behind the cart, a double rainbow shone, which I took for an omen. Presently we came to a rest camp, where we told our sad story of empty tummies, and were put up for the night. A Jock—all Highlanders are called Jock—looked after us. Next morning we started out afresh in a motor

lorry and finished at a Y. M. C. A. tent, where we stayed two nights. On Wednesday we met the General in Command of our Division, who posted me to the battery, which is said to be the best in the best brigade in the best division—so you may see I'm in luck. I found the battery just having come out of action—we expect to go back again in a day or two. Major B. is the O. C.—a fine man. The lieutenant who shares my tent won the Military Cross at Ypres last Spring. I'm very happy—which will make you happy—and longing for my first taste of real war.

How strangely far away I am from you—all the experiences so unshared and different. Long before this reaches you I shall have been in action several times. This time three years ago my streak of luck came to me and I was prancing round New York. To-day I am much more genuinely happy in mind, for I feel, as I never felt when I was only writing, that I am doing something difficult which has no element of self in it. If I come back, life will be a much less restless affair.

This letter! I can imagine it being delivered and the shout from whoever takes it and the comments. I make the contrast in my mind—this little lean-to spread of canvas about four

feet high, the horse-lines, guns, sentries going up and down—and then the dear home and the well-loved faces.

Good-bye. Don't be at all nervous.

Yours lovingly,

Con.

X

September 12th, Tuesday.

DEAREST M.:

You will already have received my first letters giving you my address over here. The wagon has just come up to our position, but it has brought me only one letter since I've been across. I'm sitting in my dug-out with shells passing over my head with the sound of ripping linen. I've already had the novel experience of firing a battery, and to-morrow I go up to the first line trenches.

It's extraordinary how commonplace war becomes to a man who is thrust among others who consider it commonplace. Not fifty yards away from me a dead German lies rotting and uncovered—I daresay he was buried once and then blown out by a shell.

Wednesday, 7 p.m.

Your letters came two hours ago—the first to reach me here—and I have done little else but

read and re-read them. How they bring the old ways of life back with their love and longing! Dear mother's tie will be worn to-morrow, and it will be ripping to feel that it was made by her hands. Your cross has not arrived yet, dear. Your mittens will be jolly for the winter. I've heard nothing from the boys yet.

To-day I took a trip into No-Man's Land—when the war is ended I'll be able to tell you all about it. I think the picture is photographed upon my memory forever. There's so much you would like to hear and so little I'm allowed to tell. Ask G. M'C. if he was at Princeton with a man named Price—an instructor there.

You ought to see the excitement when the water-cart brings us our mail and the letters are handed out. Some of the gunners have evidently told their Canadian girls that they are officers, and so they are addressed on their letters as lieutenants. I have to censor some of their replies, and I can tell you they are as often funny as pathetic. The ones to their mothers are childish, too, and have rows of kisses. I think men are always kiddies if you look beneath the surface. The snapshots did fill me with a wanting to be with you in Kootenay. But that's not where you'll receive this. There'll probably be a fire in the sitting-room at home, and a strong

aroma of coffee and tobacco. You'll be sitting in a low chair before the fire and your fingers rubbing the hair above your left ear as you read this aloud. I'd like to walk in on you and say, "No more need for letters now." Some day soon, I pray and expect.

Tell dear Papa and Mother that their answers come next. What a lot of love you each one manage to put into your written pages! I'm afraid if I let myself go that way I might make you unhappy.

Since writing this far I have had supper. I'm now sleeping in a new dug-out and get a shower of mould on my sleeping-kit each time the guns are fired. One doesn't mind that particularly, especially when you know that the earth walls make you safe. I have a candle in an old petrol tin and dodge the shadows as I write. You know, this artillery game is good sport and one takes everything as it comes with a joke. The men are splendid—their cheeriness comes up bubbling whenever the occasion calls for the dumps. Certainly there are fine qualities which war, despite its unnaturalness, develops. I'm hats off to every infantry private I meet nowadays.

God bless you and all of you.

Yours lovingly, Con.

The reference in the previous letter to a cross is to a little bronze cross of Francis of Assisi.

Many years ago I visited Assisi, and, on leaving, the monks gave me four of these small bronze crosses, assuring me that those who wore them were securely defended in all peril by the efficacious prayers of St. Francis.

Just before Coningsby left Shorncliff to go to France he wrote to us and asked if we couldn't send him something to hang round his neck for luck. We fortunately had one of these crosses of St. Francis at the ranch, and his sister—the M. of these letters—sent it to him. It arrived safely, and he has worn it ever since.

XI

September 15th, 1916.

DEAR FATHER:

Your last letter to me was written on a quiet morning in August—in the summer house at Kootenay. It came up yesterday evening on a water-cart from the wagon-lines to a scene a little in contrast.

It's a fortnight to-day since I left England, and already I've seen action. Things move quickly in this game, and it is a game—one

which brings out both the best and the worst qualities in a man. If unconscious heroism is the virtue most to be desired, and heroism spiced with a strong sense of humour at that, then pretty well every man I have met out here has the amazing guts to wear his crown of thorns as though it were a cap-and-bells. To do that for the sake of corporate stout-heartedness is, I think, the acme of what Aristotle meant by virtue. A strong man, or a good man or a brainless man, can walk to meet pain with a smile on his mouth because he knows that he is strong enough to bear it, or worthy enough to defy it, or because he is such a fool that he has no imagination. But these chaps are neither particularly strong, good, nor brainless; they're more like children, utterly casual with regard to trouble, and quite aware that it is useless to struggle against their elders. So they have the merriest of times while they can, and when the governess, Death, summons them to bed, they obey her with unsurprised quietness. It sends the mercury of one's optimism rising to see the way they do it. I search my mind to find the bigness of motive which supports them, but it forever evades me. These lads are not the kind who philosophise about life; they're the sort, many of them, who would ordinarily wear corduroys and smoke a

cutty pipe. I suppose the Christian martyrs would have done the same had corduroys been the fashion in that day, and if a Roman Raleigh had discovered tobacco.

I wrote this about midnight and didn't get any further, as I was up till six carrying on and firing the battery. After adding another page or two I want to get some sleep, as I shall probably have to go up to the observation station to watch the effect of fire to-night. But before I turn in I want to tell you that I had the most gorgeous mail from everybody. Now that I'm in touch with you all again, it's almost like saying "How-do?" every night and morning.

I daresay you'll wonder how it feels to be under shell-fire. This is how it feels—you don't realise your danger until you come to think about it afterwards—at the time it's like playing cocoa-nut shies at a coon's head—only you're the coon's head. You take too much interest in the sport of dodging to be afraid. You'll hear the Tommies saying if one bursts nearly on them, "Line, you blighter, line. Five minutes more left," just as though they were reprimanding the unseen Hun battery for rotten shooting.

The great word of the Tommies here is "No bloody bon"—a strange mixture of French and English, which means that a thing is no good.

If it pleases them it's *Jake*—though where Jake comes from nobody knows.

Now I must get a wink or two, as I don't know when I may have to start off.

Ever yours, with love,

CON.

XII

September 19th, 1916.

DEAREST MOTHER:

I've been in France 19 days, and it hasn't taken me long to go into action. Soon I shall be quite an old hand. I'm just back from 24 hours in the Observation Post, from which one watches the effect of fire. I understand now and forgive the one phrase which the French children have picked up from our Tommies on account of its frequent occurrence—"bl—— mud." I never knew that mud could be so thick and treacly. All my fear that I might be afraid under shell-fire is over—you get to believe that if you're going to be hit you're going to be. But David's phrase keeps repeating itself in my mind, "Ten thousand shall fall at thy side, etc., but it shall not come nigh unto thee." It's a curious thing that the men who are most afraid are those who get most easily struck. A friend of G. M'C.'s was hit the other day within thirty yards of me—

he was a Princeton chap. I mentioned him in one of my previous letters. Our right section commander got a blighty two days ago and is probably now in England. He went off on a firing battery wagon, grinning all over his face, saying he wouldn't sell that bit of blood and shrapnel for a thousand pounds. I'm wearing your tie—it's the envy of the battery. All the officers wanted me to give them the name of my girl. It never occurs to men that mothers will do things like that.

Thank the powers it has stopped raining and we'll be able to get dry. I came in plastered from head to foot with lying in the rain on my tummy and peering over the top of a trench. Isn't it a funny change from comfortable breakfasts, press notices and a blazing fire?

Do you want any German souvenirs? Just at present I can get plenty. I have a splendid bayonet and a belt with Kaiser Bill's arms on it—but you can't forward these things from France. The Germans swear that they're not using bayonets with saw-edges, but you can buy them for five francs from the Tommies—ones they've taken from the prisoners or else picked up.

You needn't be nervous about me. I'm a great little dodger of whizz-bangs. Besides I

have a superstition that there's something in the power of M.'s cross to bless. It came with the mittens, and is at present round my neck.

You know what it sounds like when they're shooting coals down an iron run-way into a cellar—well, imagine a thousand of them. That's what I'm hearing while I write.

God bless you; I'm very happy.

Yours ever,

CON.

XIII

September 19th, 1916.

DEAREST FATHER:

I'm writing you your birthday letter early, as I don't know how busy I may be in the next week, nor how long this may take to reach you. You know how much love I send you and how I would like to be with you. D'you remember the birthday three years ago when we set the victrola going outside your room door? Those were my high-jinks days when very many things seemed possible. I'd rather be the person I am now than the person I was then. Life was selfish though glorious.

Well, I've seen my first modern battlefield and am quite disillusioned about the splendour of war. The splendour is all in the souls of the

men who creep through the squalor like vermin—it's in nothing external. There was a chap here the other day who deserved the V. C. four times over by running back through the Hun shell fire to bring news that the infantry wanted more artillery support. I was observing for my brigade in the forward station at the time. How he managed to live through the ordeal nobody knows. But men laugh while they do these things. It's fine.

A modern battlefield is the abomination of abominations. Imagine a vast stretch of dead country, pitted with shell-holes as though it had been mutilated with small-pox. There's not a leaf or a blade of grass in sight. Every house has either been leveled or is in ruins. No bird sings. Nothing stirs. The only live sound is at night—the scurry of rats. You enter a kind of ditch, called a trench; it leads on to another and another in an unjoyful maze. From the sides feet stick out, and arms and faces—the dead of previous encounters. "One of our chaps," you say casually, recognising him by his boots or khaki, or "Poor blighter—a Hun!" One can afford to forget enmity in the presence of the dead. It is horribly difficult sometimes to distinguish between the living and the slaughtered—they both lie so silently in their little ken-

nels in the earthen bank. You push on—especially if you are doing observation work, till you are past your own front line and out in No Man's Land. You have to crouch and move warily now. Zing! A bullet from a German sniper. You laugh and whisper, "A near one, that." My first trip to the trenches was up to No Man's Land. I went in the early dawn and came to a Madame Tussaud's show of the dead, frozen into immobility in the most extraordinary attitudes. Some of them were part way out of the ground, one hand pressed to the wound, the other pointing, the head sunken and the hair plastered over the forehead by repeated rains. I kept on wondering what my companions would look like had they been three weeks dead. My imagination became ingeniously and vividly morbid. When I had to step over them to pass, it seemed as though they must clutch at my trench coat and ask me to help. Poor lonely people, so brave and so anonymous in their death! Somewhere there is a woman who loved each one of them and would give her life for my opportunity to touch the poor clay that had been kind to her. It's like walking through the day of resurrection to visit No Man's Land. Then the Huns see you and the shrapnel begins to fall—you crouch like a dog and run for it.

One gets used to shell-fire up to a point, but there's not a man who doesn't want to duck when he hears one coming. The worst of all is the whizz-bang, because it doesn't give you a chance—it pounces and is on you the same moment that it bangs. There's so much I wish that I could tell you. I can only say this, at the moment we're making history.

What a curious birthday letter! I think of all your other birthdays—the ones before I met these silent men with the green and yellow faces, and the blackened lips which will never speak again. What happy times we have had as a family—what happy jaunts when you took me in those early days, dressed in a sailor suit, when you went hunting pictures. Yet, for all the damnability of what I now witness, I was never quieter in my heart. To have surrendered to an imperative self-denial brings a peace which self-seeking never brought.

So don't let this birthday be less gay for my absence. It ought to be the proudest in your life—proud because your example has taught each of your sons to do the difficult things which seem right. It would have been a condemnation of you if any one of us had been a shirker.

"I want to buy fine things for you
And be a soldier if I can."

The lines come back to me now. You read them to me first in the dark little study from a green oblong book. You little thought that I would be a soldier—even now I can hardly realise the fact. It seems a dream from which I shall wake up. Am I really killing men day by day? Am I really in jeopardy myself?

Whatever happens I'm not afraid, and I'll give you reason to be glad of me.

Very much love,

CON.

The poem referred to in this letter was actually written for Coningsby when he was between five and six years old. The dark little study which he describes was in the old house at Wesley's Chapel, in the City Road, London—and it was very dark, with only one window, looking out upon a dingy yard. The green oblong book in which I used to write my poems I still have; and it is an illustration of the tenacity of a child's memory that he should recall it. The poem was called *A Little Boy's Programme,* and ran thus:

I am so very young and small,
That, when big people pass me by,
I sometimes think they are so high
I'll never be a man at all.

And yet I want to be a man
Because so much I want to do;
I want to buy fine things for you,
And be a soldier, if I can.

When I'm a man I will not let
Poor little children starve, or be
Ill-used, or stand and beg of me
With naked feet out in the wet.

Now, don't you laugh!—The father kissed
The little serious mouth and said
"You've almost made me cry instead,
You blessed little optimist."

XIV

September 21st, 1916.

My Very Dear M.:

I am wearing your talisman while I write and have a strong superstition in its efficacy. The efficacy of your socks is also very noticeable—I wore them the first time on a trip to the Forward Observation Station. I had to lie on my tummy in the mud, my nose just showing above the parapet, for the best part of twenty-four hours. Your socks little thought I would take them into such horrid places when you made them.

Last night both the King and Sir Sam sent us congratulations—I popped in just at the right

time. I daresay you know far more about our doings than I do. Only this morning I picked up the *London Times* and read a full account of everything I have witnessed. The account is likely to be still fuller in the New York papers.

"Home for Christmas"—that's what the Tommies are promising their mothers and sweethearts in all their letters that I censor. Yesterday I was offered an Imperial commission in the army of occupation. But home for Christmas, will be Christmas, 1917—I can't think that it will be earlier.

Very much love,

CON.

XV

Sunday, September 24th, 1916.

DEAREST MOTHER:

Your locket has just reached me, and I have strung it round my neck with M.'s cross. Was it M.'s cross the other night that accounted for my luck? I was in a gun-pit when a shell landed, killing a man only a foot away from me and wounding three others—I and the sergeant were the only two to get out all right. Men who have been out here some time have a dozen stories of similar near squeaks. And talking of squeaks, it was a mouse that saved one man. It

kept him awake to such an extent that he determined to move to another place. Just as he got outside the dug-out a shell fell on the roof.

You'll be pleased to know that we have a ripping chaplain or Padre, as they call chaplains, with us. He plays the game, and I've struck up a great friendship with him. We discuss literature and religion when we're feeling a bit fed up. We talk at home of our faith being tested—one begins to ask strange questions here when he sees what men are allowed by the Almighty to do to one another, and so it's a fine thing to be in constant touch with a great-hearted chap who can risk his life daily to speak of the life hereafter to dying Tommies.

I wish I could tell you of my doings, but it's strictly against orders. You may read in the papers of actions in which I've taken part and never know that I was there.

We live for the most part on tinned stuff, but our appetites make anything taste palatable. Living and sleeping in the open air keeps one ravenous. And one learns to sleep the sleep of the just despite the roaring of the guns.

God bless you each one and give us peaceful hearts.

Yours ever,

Con.

XVI

September 28th, 1916.

My Dears:

We're in the midst of a fine old show, so I don't get much opportunity for writing. Suffice it to say that I've seen the big side of war by now and the extraordinary uncalculating courage of it. Men run out of a trench to an attack with as much eagerness as they would display in overtaking a late bus. If you want to get an idea of what meals are like when a row is on, order the McAlpin to spread you a table where 34th crosses Broadway—and wait for the uptown traffic on the Elevated. It's wonderful to see the waiters dodging with dishes through the shell-holes.

It's a wonderful autumn day, golden and mellow; I picture to myself what this country must have looked like before the desolation of war struck it.

I was Brigade observation officer on September 26th, and wouldn't have missed what I saw for a thousand dollars. It was a touch and go business, with shells falling everywhere and machine-gun fire—but something glorious to remember. I had the great joy of being useful in

setting a Hun position on fire. I think the war will be over in a twelvemonth.

Our great joy is composing menus of the meals we'll eat when we get home. Good-bye for the present.

CON.

XVII

October 1st, 1916.

MY DEAREST M.:

Sunday morning, your first back in Newark. You're not up yet owing to the difference in time—I can imagine the quiet house with the first of the morning stealing greyly in. You'll be presently going to church to sit in your old-fashioned mahogany pew. There's not much of Sunday in our atmosphere—only the little one can manage to keep in his heart. I shall share the echo of yours by remembering.

I'm waiting orders at the present moment to go forward with the Colonel and pick out a new gun position. You know I'm very happy—satisfied for the first time I'm doing something big enough to make me forget all failures and self-contempts. I know at last that I can measure up to the standard I have always coveted for myself. So don't worry yourselves about any note of hardship that you may interpret into my let-

ters, for the deprivation is fully compensated for by the winged sense of exaltation one has.

Things have been a little warm round us lately. A gun to our right, another to our rear and another to our front were knocked out with direct hits. We've got some of the chaps taking their meals with us now because their mess was all shot to blazes. There was an officer who was with me at the 53rd blown thirty feet into the air while I was watching. He picked himself up and insisted on carrying on, although his face was a mass of bruises. I walked in on the biggest engagement of the entire war the moment I came out here. There was no gradual breaking-in for me. My first trip to the front line was into a trench full of dead.

Have you seen Lloyd George's great speech? I'm all with him. No matter what the cost and how many of us have to give our lives, this War must be so finished that war may be forever at an end. If the devils who plan wars could only see the abysmal result of their handiwork! Give them one day in the trenches under shell-fire when their lives aren't worth a five minutes' purchase—or one day carrying back the wounded through this tortured country, or one day in a Red Cross train. No one can imagine the damnable waste and Christlessness of this battering

of human flesh. The only way that this War can be made holy is by making it so thorough that war will be finished for all time.

Papa at least will be awake by now. How familiar the old house seems to me—I can think of the place of every picture. Do you set the victrola going now-a-days? I bet you play Boys in Khaki, Boys in Blue.

Please send me anything in the way of eatables that the goodness of your hearts can imagine—also smokes.

Later.

I came back from the front-line all right and have since been hard at it firing. Your letters reached me in the midst of a bombardment—I read them in a kind of London fog of gunpowder smoke, with my steel helmet tilted back, in the interval of commanding my section through a megaphone.

Don't suppose that I'm in any way unhappy—I'm as cheerful as a cricket and do twice as much hopping—I have to. There's something extraordinarily bracing about taking risks and getting away with it—especially when you know that you're contributing your share to a far-reaching result. My mother is the mother of a soldier now, and soldiers' mothers don't lie awake at night imagining—they just say a prayer

for their sons and leave everything in God's hands. I'm sure you'd far rather I died than not play the man to the fullest of my strength. It isn't when you die that matters—it's how. Not but what I intend to return to Newark and make the house reek of tobacco smoke before I've done.

We're continually in action now, and the casualty to B. has left us short-handed—moreover we're helping out another battery which has lost two officers. As you've seen by the papers, we've at last got the Hun on the run. Three hundred passed me the other day unescorted, coming in to give themselves up as prisoners. They're the dirtiest lot you ever set eyes on, and looked as though they hadn't eaten for months. I wish I could send you some souvenirs. But we can't send them out of France.

I'm scribbling by candlelight and everything's jumping with the stamping of the guns. I wear the locket and cross all the time.

Yours with much love,

CON.

XVIII

October 13th, 1916.

DEAR ONES:

I have only time to write and assure you that I am safe. We're living in trenches at pres-

ent—I have my sleeping bag placed on a stretcher to keep it fairly dry. By the time you get this we expect to be having a rest, as we've been hard at it now for an unusually long time. How I wish that I could tell you so many things that are big and vivid in my mind—but the censor——!

Yesterday I had an exciting day. I was up forward when word came through that an officer still further forward was wounded and he'd been caught in a heavy enemy fire. I had only a kid telephonist with me, but we found a stretcher, went forward and got him out. The earth was hopping up and down like pop-corn in a frying pan. The unfortunate thing was that the poor chap died on the way out. It was only the evening before that we had dined together and he had told me what he was going to do with his next leave.

God bless you all,

CON.

XIX

October 14th, 1916.

DEAREST MOTHER:

I'm still all right and well. To-day I had the funniest experience of my life—got caught in a Hun curtain of fire and had to lie on my

tummy for two hours in a trench with the shells bursting five yards from me—and never a scratch. You know how I used to wonder what I'd do under such circumstances. Well, I laughed. All I could think of was the sleek people walking down Fifth Avenue, and the equally sleek crowds taking tea at the Waldorf. It struck me as ludicrous that I, who had been one of them, should be lying there lunchless. For a little while I was slightly deaf with the concussions.

That poem keeps on going through my head,

Oh, to come home once more, when the dusk is falling,
To see the nursery lighted and the children's table spread;
"Mother, mother, mother!" the eager voices calling,
"The baby was so sleepy that he had to go to bed!"

Wouldn't it be good, instead of sitting in a Hun dug-out?

Yours lovingly,

CON.

XX

October 15th, 1916.

DEAR ONES:

We're still in action, but are in hopes that soon we may be moved to winter quarters. We've had our taste of mud, and are anxious to move into better quarters before we get our next.

I think I told you that our O. C. had got wounded in the feet, and our right section commander got it in the shoulder a little earlier—so we're a bit short-handed and find ourselves with plenty of work.

I have curiously lucid moments when recent happenings focus themselves in what seems to be their true perspective. The other night I was Forward Observation officer on one of our recent battlefields. I had to watch the front all night for signals, etc. There was a full white moon sailing serenely overhead, and when I looked at it I could almost fancy myself back in the old melancholy pomp of autumn woodlands where the leaves were red, not with the colour of men's blood. My mind went back to so many by-gone days—especially to three years ago. I seemed so vastly young then, upon reflection. For a little while I was full of regrets for many things wasted, and then I looked at the battlefield with its scattered kits and broken rifles. Nothing seemed to matter very much. A rat came out—then other rats. I stood there feeling extraordinarily aloof from all things that can hurt, and—you'll smile—I planned a novel. O, if I get back, how differently I shall write! When you've faced the worst in so many forms,

you lose your fear and arrive at peace. There's a marvellous grandeur about all this carnage and desolation—men's souls rise above the distress—they have to in order to survive. When you see how cheap men's bodies are you cannot help but know that the body is the least part of personality.

You can let up on your nervousness when you get this, for I shall almost certainly be in a safer zone. We've done more than our share and must be withdrawn soon. There's hardly a battery which does not deserve a dozen D. S. O.'s with a V. C. or two thrown in.

It's 4.30 now—you'll be in church and, I hope, wearing my flowers. Wait till I come back and you shall go to church with the biggest bunch of roses that ever were pinned to a feminine chest. I wonder when that will be.

We have heaps of humour out here. You should have seen me this morning, sitting on the gun-seat while my batman cut my hair. A sandbag was spread over my shoulders in place of a towel and the gun-detachment stood round and gave advice. I don't know what I look like, for I haven't dared to gaze into my shaving mirror.

Good luck to us all,

CON.

XXI

October 18th, 1916.

DEAREST M.:

I've come down to the lines to-day; to-morrow I go back again. I'm sitting alone in a deep chalk dug-out—it is 10 p.m. and I have lit a fire by splitting wood with a bayonet. Your letters from Montreal reached me yesterday. They came up in the water-cart when we'd all begun to despair of mail. It was wonderful the silence that followed while every one went back home for a little while, and most of them met their best girls. We've fallen into the habit of singing in parts. Jerusalem the Golden is a great favourite as we wait for our breakfast—we go through all our favourite songs, including Poor Old Adam Was My Father. Our greatest favourite is one which is symbolising the hopes that are in so many hearts on this greatest battlefield in history. We sing it under shell-fire as a kind of prayer, we sing it as we struggle knee-deep in the appalling mud, we sing it as we sit by a candle in our deep captured German dug-outs. It runs like this:

"There's a long, long trail a-winding
Into the land of my dreams,
Where the nightingales are singing
And a white moon beams:

There's a long, long night of waiting
Until my dreams all come true;
Till the day when I'll be going down
That long, long trail with you."

You ought to be able to get it, and then you will be singing it when I'm doing it.

No, I don't know what to ask from you for Christmas—unless a plum pudding and a general surprise box of sweets and food stuffs. If you don't mind my suggesting it, I wouldn't a bit mind a Christmas box at once—a schoolboy's tuck box. I wear the locket, cross, and tie all the time as kind of charms against danger—they give me the feeling of loving hands going with me everywhere.

God bless you.

Yours ever,

CON.

XXII

October 23rd, 1916.

DEAREST ALL:

As you know I have been in action ever since I left England and am still. I've lived in various extemporised dwellings and am at present writing from an eight foot deep hole dug in the ground and covered over with galvanised iron and sand-bags. We have made ourselves

very comfortable, and a fire is burning—I correct that—comfortable until it rains, I should say, when the water finds its own level. We have just finished with two days of penetrating rain and mist—in the trenches the mud was up to my knees, so you can imagine the joy of wading down these shell-torn tunnels. Good thick socks have been priceless.

You'll be pleased to hear that two days ago I was made Right Section Commander—which is fairly rapid promotion. It means a good deal more work and responsibility, but it gives me a contact with the men which I like.

I don't know when I'll get leave—not for another two months anyway. It would be ripping if I had word in time for you to run over to England for the brief nine days.

I plan novels galore and wonder whether I shall ever write them the way I see them now. My imagination is to an extent crushed by the stupendousness of reality. I think I am changed in some stern spiritual way—stripped of flabbiness. I am perhaps harder—I can't say. That I should be a novelist seems unreasonable—it's so long since I had my own way in the world and met any one on artistic terms. But I have enough ego left to be very interested in my book. And by the way, when we're out at the front and

the battery wants us to come in they simply 'phone up the password, "Slaves of Freedom," the meaning of which we all understand.

You are ever in my thoughts, and I pray the day may not be far distant when we meet again.

CON.

XXIII

October 27th, 1916.

DEAREST FAMILY:

All to-day I've been busy registering our guns. There is little chance of rest—one would suppose that we intended to end the war by spring.

Two new officers joined our battery from England, which makes the work lighter. One of them brings the news that D., one of the two officers who crossed over from England with me and wandered through France with me in search of our Division, is already dead. He was a corking fellow, and I'm very sorry. He was caught by a shell in the head and legs.

I am still living in a sand-bagged shell-hole eight feet beneath the level of the ground. I have a sleeping bag with an eider-down inside it, for my bed; it is laid on a stretcher, which is placed in a roofed-in trench. For meals, when there isn't a block on the roads, we do very well; we subscribe pretty heavily to the mess, and

have an officer back at the wagon-lines to do our purchasing. When we move forward into a new position, however, we go pretty short, as roads have to be built for the throng of traffic. Most of what we eat is tinned—and I never want to see tinned salmon again when this war is ended. I have a personal servant, a groom and two horses—but haven't been on a horse for seven weeks on account of being in action. We're all pretty fed up with continuous firing and living so many hours in the trenches. The way artillery is run to-day an artillery lieutenant is more in the trenches than an infantryman—the only thing he doesn't do is to go over the parapet in an attack. And one of our chaps did that the other day, charging the Huns with a bar of chocolate in one hand and a revolver in the other. I believe he set a fashion which will be imitated. Three times in my experience I have seen the infantry jump out of their trenches and go across. It's a sight never to be forgotten. One time there were machine guns behind me and they sent a message to me, asking me to lie down and take cover. That was impossible, as I was observing for my brigade, so I lay on the parapet till the bullets began to fall too close for comfort, then I dodged out into a shell-hole with the German barrage bursting all around

me, and had a most gorgeous view of a modern attack. That was some time ago, so you needn't be nervous.

Have I mentioned rum to you? I never tasted it to my knowledge until I came out here. We get it served us whenever we're wet. It's the one thing which keeps a man alive in the winter—you can sleep when you're drenched through and never get a cold if you take it.

At night, by a fire, eight feet underground, we sing all the dear old songs. We manage a kind of glee—Clementina, The Long, Long Trail, Three Blind Mice, Long, Long Ago, Rock of Ages. Hymns are quite favourites.

Don't worry about me; your prayers weave round me a mantle of defence.

Yours with more love than I can write,

CON.

XXIV

October 31st, 1916.
Hallowe'en.

DEAREST PEOPLE:

Once more I'm taking the night-firing and so have a chance to write to you. I got letters from you all, and they each deserve answers, but I have so little time to write. We've been having beastly weather—drowned out of our little

houses below ground, with rivers running through our beds. The mud is once more up to our knees and gets into whatever we eat. The wonder is that we keep healthy—I suppose it's the open air. My throat never troubles me and I'm free from colds in spite of wet feet. The main disadvantage is that we rarely get a chance to wash or change our clothes. Your ideas of an army with its buttons all shining is quite erroneous; we look like drunk and disorderlies who have spent the night in the gutter—and we have the same instinct for fighting.

In the trenches the other day I heard mother's Suffolk tongue and had a jolly talk with a chap who shared many of my memories. It was his first trip in and the Huns were shelling badly, but he didn't seem at all upset.

We're still hard at it and have given up all idea of a rest—the only way we'll get one is with a blighty. You say how often you tell yourselves that the same moon looks down on me; it does, but on a scene how different! We advance over old battlefields—everything is blasted. If you start digging, you turn up what's left of something human. If there were any grounds for superstition, surely the places in which I have been should be ghost-haunted. One never thinks about it. For myself I have increasingly the feel-

ing that I am protected by your prayers; I tell myself so when I am in danger.

Here I sit in an old sweater and muddy breeches, the very reverse of your picture of a soldier, and I imagine to myself your receipt of this. Our chief interest is to enquire whether milk, jam and mail have come up from the wagon-lines; it seems a faery-tale that there are places where milk and jam can be had for the buying. See how simple we become.

Poor little house at Kootenay! I hate to think of it empty. We had such good times there twelve months ago. They have a song here to a nursery rhyme lilt, Après le Guerre Finis; it goes on to tell of all the good times we'll have when the war is ended. Every night I invent a new story of my own celebration of the event, usually, as when I was a kiddie, just before I fall asleep—only it doesn't seem possible that the war will ever end.

I hear from the boys very regularly. There's just the chance that I may get leave to London in the New Year and meet them before they set out. I always picture you with your heads high in the air. I'm glad to think of you as proud because of the pain we've made you suffer.

Once again I shall think of you on Papa's birthday. I don't think this will be the saddest

he will have to remember. It might have been if we three boys had still all been with him. If I were a father, I would prefer at all costs that my sons should be men. What good comrades we've always been, and what long years of happy times we have in memory—all the way down from a little boy in a sailor-suit to Kootenay!

I fell asleep in the midst of this. I've now got to go out and start the other gun firing. With very much love.

Yours,

CON.

XXV

November 1st, 1916.

MY DEAREST M.:

Peace after a storm! Your letter was not brought up by the water-wagon this evening, but by an orderly—the mud prevented wheel-traffic. I was just sitting down to read it when Fritz began to pay us too much attention. I put down your letter, grabbed my steel helmet, rushed out to see where the shells were falling, and then cleared my men to a safer area. (By the way, did I tell you that I had been made Right Section Commander?) After about half an hour I came back and settled down by a fire made of smashed ammunition boxes in a stove borrowed

from a ruined cottage. I'm always ashamed that my letters contain so little news and are so uninteresting. This thing is so big and dreadful that it does not bear putting down on paper. I read the papers with the accounts of singing soldiers and other rubbish; they depict us as though we were a lot of hair-brained idiots instead of men fully realising our danger, who plod on because it's our duty. I've seen a good many men killed by now—we all have—consequently the singing soldier story makes us smile. We've got a big job; we know that we've got to "Carry On" whatever happens—so we wear a stern grin and go to it. There's far more heroism in the attitude of men out here than in the footlight attitude that journalists paint for the public. It isn't a singing matter to go on firing a gun when gun-pits are going up in smoke within sight of you.

What a terrible desecration war is! You go out one week and look through your glasses at a green, smiling country—little churches, villages nestling among woods, white roads running across a green carpet; next week you see nothing but ruins and a country-side pitted with shell-holes. All night the machine guns tap like riveting machines when a New York sky-scraper is in the building. Then suddenly in the night a

bombing attack will start, and the sky grows white with signal rockets. Orders come in for artillery retaliation, and your guns begin to stamp the ground like stallions; in the darkness on every side you can see them snorting fire. Then stillness again, while Death counts his harvest; the white rockets grow fainter and less hysterical. For an hour there is blackness.

My batman consoles himself with singing,

> "Pack up your troubles in your old kit-bag,
> And smile, smile, smile."

There's a lot in his philosophy—it's best to go on smiling even when some one who was once your pal lies forever silent in his blanket on a stretcher.

The great uplifting thought is that we have proved ourselves men. In our death we set a standard which in ordinary life we could never have followed. Inevitably we should have sunk below our highest self. Here we know that the world will remember us and that our loved ones, in spite of tears, will be proud of us. What God will say to us we cannot guess—but He can't be too hard on men who did their duty. I think we all feel that trivial former failures are washed out by this final sacrifice. When little M. used to recite "Breathes there a man with soul so dead,

who never to himself had said, 'This is my own, my native land,' " I never thought that I should have the chance that has now been given to me. I feel a great and solemn gratitude that I have been thought worthy. Life has suddenly become effective and worthy by reason of its carelessness of death.

By the way, that Princeton man I mentioned so long ago was killed forty yards away from me on my first trip into the trenches. Probably G. M'C. and his other friends know by now. He was the first man I ever saw snuffed out.

I'm wearing your mittens and find them a great comfort. I'll look forward to some more of your socks—I can do with plenty of them. If any of your friends are making things for soldiers, I wish you'd get them to send them to this battery, as they would be gratefully accepted by the men.

I wish I could come to *The Music Master* with you. I wonder how long till we do all those intimately family things together again.

Good-bye, my dearest M. I live for home letters and am rarely disappointed.

God bless you, and love to you all.

Yours ever,

CON.

XXVI

November 4th, 1916.

My Dearest Mother:

This morning I was wakened up in the gunpit where I was sleeping by the arrival of the most wonderful parcel of mail. It was really a kind of Christmas morning for me. My servant had lit a fire in a punctured petrol can and the place looked very cheery. First of all entered an enormous affair, which turned out to be a stove which C. had sent. Then there was a sand-bag containing all your gifts. You may bet I made for that first, and as each knot was undone remembered the loving hands that had done it up. I am now going up to a twenty-four-hour shift of observing, and shall take up the malted milk and some blocks of chocolate for a hot drink. It somehow makes you seem very near to me to receive things packed with your hands. When I go forward I shall also take candles and a copy of *Anne Veronica* with me, so that if I get a chance I can forget time.

Always when I write to you odds and ends come to mind, smacking of local colour. After an attack some months ago I met a solitary private wandering across a shell-torn field. I watched him and thought something was wrong

by the aimlessness of his progress. When I spoke to him, he looked at me mistily and said, "Dead men. Moonlit road." He kept on repeating the phrase, and it was all that one could get out of him. Probably the dead men and the moonlit road were the last sights he had seen before he went insane.

Another touching thing happened two days ago. A Major turned up who had travelled fifty miles by motor lorries and any conveyance he could pick up on the road. He had left his unit to come to have a glimpse of our front-line trench where his son was buried. The boy had died there some days ago in going over the parapet. I persuaded him that he ought not to go alone, and that in any case it wasn't a healthy spot. At last he consented to let me take him to a point from which he could see the ground over which his son had attacked and led his men. The sun was sinking behind us. He stood there very straightly, peering through my glasses—and then forgot all about me and began speaking to his son in childish love-words. "Gone West," they call dying out here—we rarely say that a man is dead. I found out afterwards that it was the boy's mother the Major was thinking of when he pledged himself to visit the grave in the front-line.

But there are happier things than that. For instance, you should hear us singing at night in our dug-out—every tune we ever learnt, I believe. Silver Threads Among the Gold, In the Gloaming, The Star of Bethlehem, I Hear You Calling Me, interspersed with Everybody Works but Father, and Poor Old Adam, etc.

I wish I could know in time when I get my leave for you to come over and meet me. I'm going to spend my nine days in the most glorious ways imaginable. To start with I won't eat anything that's canned and, to go on, I won't get out of bed till I feel inclined. And if you're there——!

Dreams and nonsense! God bless you all and keep us near and safe though absent. Alive or "Gone West" I shall never be far from you; you may depend on that—and I shall always hope to feel you brave and happy. This is a great game—cheese-mites pitting themselves against all the splendours of Death. Please, please write well ahead, so that I may not miss your Christmas letters.

Yours lovingly,

CON.

XXVII

November 6th, 1916.

My Dear Ones:

Such a wonderful day it has been—I scarcely know where to start. I came down last night from twenty-four hours in the mud, where I had been observing. I'd spent the night in a hole dug in the side of the trench and a dead Hun forming part of the roof. I'd sat there reliving so many things—the ecstatic moments of my life when I first touched fame—and my feet were so cold that I could not feel them, so I thought all the harder of the pleasant things of the past. Then, as I say, I came back to the gun position to learn that I was to have one day off at the back of the lines. You can't imagine what that meant to me—one day in a country that is green, one day where there is no shell-fire, one day where you don't turn up corpses with your tread! For two months I have never left the guns except to go forward and I have never been from under shell-fire. All night long as I have slept the ground had been shaken by the stamping of the guns—and now after two months, to come back to comparative normality! The reason for this privilege being granted was that the powers that be had come to the conclusion that

it was time I had a bath. Since I sleep in my clothes and water is too valuable for washing anything but the face and hands, they were probably right in their guess at my condition.

So with the greatest holiday of my life in prospect I went to the empty gunpit in which I sleep, and turned in. This morning I set out early with my servant, tramping back across the long, long battlefields which our boys have won. The mud was knee-deep in places, but we floundered on till we came to our old and deserted gun-position where my horses waited for me. From there I rode to the wagon-lines—the first time I've sat a horse since I came into action. Far behind me the thunder of winged murder grew more faint. The country became greener; trees even had leaves upon them which fluttered against the grey-blue sky. It was wonderful—like awaking from an appalling nightmare. My little beast was fresh and seemed to share my joy, for she stepped out bravely.

When I arrived at the wagon-lines I would not wait—I longed to see something even greener and quieter. My groom packed up some oats and away we went again. My first objective was the military baths; I lay in hot water for half-an-hour and read the advertisements of my book. As I lay there, for the first time since I've been

out, I began to get a half-way true perspective of myself. What's left of the egotism of the author came to life, and—now laugh—I planned my next novel—planned it to the sound of men singing, because they were clean for the first time in months. I left my towels and soap with a military policeman, by the roadside, and went prancing off along country roads in search of the almost forgotten places where people don't kill one another. Was it imagination? There seemed to me to be a different look in the faces of the men I met—for the time being they were neither hunters nor hunted. There were actually cows in the fields. At one point, where pollarded trees stand like a Hobbema sketch against the sky, a group of officers were coursing a hare, following a big black hound on horseback. We lost our way. A drenching rainstorm fell over us—we didn't care; and we saw as we looked back a most beautiful thing—a rainbow over green fields. It was as romantic as the first rainbow in childhood.

All day I have been seeing lovely and familiar things as though for the first time. I've been a sort of Lazarus, rising out of his tomb and praising God at the sound of a divine voice. You don't know how exquisite a ploughed field can

look, especially after rain, unless you have feared that you might never see one again.

I came to a grey little village, where civilians were still living, and then to a gate and a garden. In the cottage was a French peasant woman who smiled, patted my hair because it was curly, and chattered interminably. The result was a huge omelette and a bottle of champagne. Then came a touch of naughtiness—a lady visitor with a copy of *La Vie Parisienne,* which she promptly bestowed on the English soldier. I read it, and dreamt of the time when I should walk the Champs Elysées again. It was growing dusk when I turned back to the noise of battle. There was a white moon in a milky sky. Motor-bikes fled by me, great lorries driven by Jehus from London buses, and automobiles which too poignantly had been Strand taxis and had taken lovers home from the Gaiety. I jogged along thinking very little, but supremely happy. Now I'm back at the wagon-line; to-morrow I go back to the guns. Meanwhile I write to you by a guttering candle.

Life, how I love you! What a wonderful kindly thing I could make of you to-night. Strangely the vision has come to me of all that you mean. Now I could write. So soon you

may go from me or be changed into a form of existence which all my training has taught me to dread. After death is there only nothingness? I think that for those who have missed love in this life there must be compensations—the little children whom they ought to have had, perhaps. To-day, after so many weeks, I have seen little children again.

And yet, so strange a havoc does this war work that, if I have to "Go West," I shall go *proudly* and quietly. I have seen too many men die bravely to make a fuss if my turn comes. A mixed passenger list old Father Charon must have each night—Englishmen, Frenchmen, and Huns. To-morrow I shall have another sight of the greenness and then—the guns.

I don't know whether I have been able to make any of my emotions clear to you in my letters. Terror has a terrible fascination. Up to now I have always been afraid—afraid of small fears. At last I meet fear itself and it stings my pride into an unpremeditated courage.

I've just had a pile of letters from you all. How ripping it is to be remembered! Letters keep one civilised.

It's late and I'm very tired. God bless you each and all.

CON.

XXVIII

November 15th, 1916.

DEAR FATHER:

I've owed you a letter for some time, but I've been getting very little leisure. You can't send steel messages to the Kaiser and love-notes to your family in the same breath.

I am amazed at the spirit you three are showing and almighty proud that you can muster such courage. I suppose none of us quite realised our strength till it came to the test. There was a time when we all doubted our own heroism. I think we were typical of our age. Every novel of the past ten years has been more or less a study in sentiment and self-distrust. We used to wonder what kind of stuff Drake's men were made of that they could jest while they died. We used to contrast ourselves with them to our own disfavour. Well, we know now that when there's a New World to be discovered we can still rise up reincarnated into spiritual pirates. It wasn't the men of our age who were at fault, but the New World that was lacking. Our New World is the Kingdom of Heroism, the doors of which are flung so wide that the meanest of us may enter. I know men out here who are the dependable daredevils of their brigades, who in

peace times were nuisances and as soon as peace is declared will become nuisances again. At the moment they're fine, laughing at Death and smiling at the chance of agony. There's a man I know of who had a record sheet of crimes. When he was out of action he was always drunk and up for office. To get rid of him, they put him into the trench mortars and within a month he had won his D. C. M. He came out and went on the spree—this particular spree consisted in stripping a Highland officer of his kilts on a moonlight night. For this he was sentenced to several months in a military prison, but asked to be allowed to serve his sentence in the trenches. He came out from his punishment a King's sergeant—which means that whatever he did nobody could degrade him. He got this for lifting his trench mortar over the parapet when all the detachment were killed. Carrying it out into a shell-hole, he held back the Hun attack and saved the situation. He got drunk again, and again chose to be returned to the trenches. This time his head was blown off while he was engaged in a special feat of gallantry. What are you to say to such men? Ordinarily they'd be blackguards, but war lifts them into splendour. In the same way you see mild men, timid men, almost girlish men, carrying out duties which in other wars

would have won V. C.'s. I don't think the soul of courage ever dies out of the race any more than the capacity for love. All it means is that the occasion is not present. For myself I try to analyse my emotions; am I simply numb, or do I imitate other people's coolness and shall I fear life again when the war is ended? There is no explanation save the great army phrase "Carry on." We "carry on" because, if we don't, we shall let other men down and put their lives in danger. And there's more than that—we all want to live up to the standard that prompted us to come.

One talks about splendour—but war isn't splendid except in the individual sense. A man by his own self-conquest can make it splendid for himself, but in the massed sense it's squalid. There's nothing splendid about a battlefield when the fight is ended—shreds of what once were men, tortured, levelled landscapes—the barbaric loneliness of Hell. I shall never forget my first dead man. He was a signalling officer, lying in the dawn on a muddy hill. I thought he was asleep at first, but when I looked more closely, I saw that his shoulder blade was showing white through his tunic. He was wearing black boots. It's odd, but the sight of black boots have the same effect on me now that black and white

stripes had in childhood. I have the superstitious feeling that to wear them would bring me bad luck.

To-night we've been singing in parts, Back in the Dear Dead Days Beyond Recall—a mournful kind of ditty to sing under the circumstances—so mournful that we had to have a game of five hundred to cheer us up.

It's now nearly 2 a.m., and I have to go out to the guns again before I go to bed. I carry your letters about in my pockets and read them at odd intervals in all kinds of places that you can't imagine.

Cheer up and remember that I'm quite happy. I wish you could be with me for just one day to understand.

Yours,

CON.

XXIX

December 3rd, 1916.

DEAR BOYS:

By this time you will be all through your exams and I hope have both passed. It'll be splendid if you can go together to the same station. You envy me, you say; well, I rather envy you. I'd like to be with you. You, at least, don't have Napoleon's fourth antagonist with

which to contend—mud. But at present I'm clean and billeted in an estaminet, in a not too bad little village. There's an old mill and still older church, and the usual farmhouses with the indispensable pile of manure under the front windows. We shall have plenty of hard work here, licking our men into shape and re-fitting.

You know how I've longed to sleep between sheets; I can now, but find them so cold that I still use my sleeping bag—such is human inconsistency. But yesterday I had a boiling bath—as good a bath as could be found in a New York hotel—and I am CLEAN.

I woke up this morning to hear some one singing Casey Jones—consequently I thought of former Christmases. My mind has been travelling back very much of late. Suddenly I see something here which reminds me of the time when E. and I were at Lisieux, or even of our Saturday excursions to Nelson when we were all together at the ranch.

Did I tell you that B., our officer who was wounded two months ago, has just returned to us. This morning he got news that his young brother has been killed in the place which we have left. I wonder when we shall grow tired of stabbing and shooting and killing. It seems to me that the war cannot end in less than two years.

I have made myself nice to the Brigade interpreter and he has found me a delightful room with electric light and a fire. It's in an old farmhouse with a brick terrace in front. My room is on the ground floor and tile-paved. The chairs are rush-bottomed and there are old quaint china plates on the shelves. There is also a quite charming mademoiselle. So you see, you don't need to pity me any more.

Just at present I'm busy getting up the Brigade Christmas Entertainment. The Colonel asked me to do it, otherwise I should have said *no,* as I want all the time I can get to myself. You can't think how jolly it is to sit again in a room which is temporarily yours after living in dug-outs, herded side by side with other men. I can be *me* now, and not a soldier of thousands when I write. You shall hear from me again soon. Hope you're having a ripping time in London.

Yours ever,

CON.

XXX

December 5th, 1916.

DEAREST M.:

I've just come in from my last tour of inspection as orderly officer, and it's close on midnight. I'm getting this line off to you to let

you know that I expect to get my nine days' leave about the beginning of January. How I wish it were possible to have you in London when I arrive, or, failing that, to spend my leave in New York!

To-morrow I make an early start on horseback for a market of the old-fashioned sort which is held at a town near by. Can you dimly picture me with my groom, followed by a mess-cart, going from stall to stall and bartering with the peasants? It'll be rather good fun and something quite out of my experience.

Christmas will be over by the time you get this, and I do hope that you had a good one. I paused to talk to the other officers; they say that they are sure that you are very beautiful and have a warm heart, and would like to send them a five-storey layer cake, half a dozen bottles of port and one Paris chef. At present I am the Dives of the mess and dole out luxuries to these Lazaruses.

Good-bye for the present.

Yours ever lovingly,

CON.

XXXI

December 6th, 1916.

DEAREST M.:

I've just undone your Christmas parcels, and already I am wearing the waistcoat and socks, and my mouth is hot with the ginger.

I expect to get leave for England on January 10th. I do wish it might be possible for some of you to cross the ocean and be in London with me—and I don't see what there is to prevent you. Unless the war ends sooner than any of us expect, it is not likely that I shall get another leave in less than nine months. So, if you want to come and if there's time when you receive this letter, just hop on a boat and let's see what London looks like together.

I wonder what kind of a Christmas you'll have. I shall picture it all. You may hear me tiptoeing up the stairs if you listen very hard. Where does the soul go in sleep? Surely mine flies back to where all of you dear people are.

I came back to my farm yesterday to find a bouquet of paper flowers at the head of my bed with a note pinned on it. Over my fire-place was hung a pathetic pair of farm-girls' heavy Sunday boots, all brightly polished, with two other notes pinned on them. The Feast of St. Nicholas

on December 7th is an opportunity for unmarried men to be reminded that there are unmarried girls in the world—wherefore the flowers. I enclose the notes. Keep them,—they may be useful for a book some day.

I'm having a pretty good rest, and am still in my old farmhouse.

Love to all,

CON.

XXXII

December 15th, 1916.

DEAREST ALL:

At the present I'm just where mother hoped I'd be—in a deep dug-out about twenty feet down—we're trying to get a fire lighted, and consequently the place is smoked out. Where I'll be for Christmas I don't know, but I hope by then to be in billets. I've just come back from the trenches, where I've been observing. The mud is not nearly so bad where I am now, and with a few days' more work, we should be quite comfortable. You'll have received my cable about my getting leave soon—I'm wondering whether the Atlantic is sufficiently quiet for any of you to risk a crossing.

Poor Basil! Your letter was the first news I got of his death. I must have watched the at-

tack in which he lost his life. One wonders now how it was that some instinct did not warn me that one of those khaki dots jumping out of the trenches was the cousin who stayed with us in London.

I'm wondering what this mystery of the German Chancellor is all about—some peace proposals, I suppose—which are sure to prove bombastic and unacceptable. It seems to us out here as though the war must go on forever. Like a boy's dream of the far-off freedom of manhood, the day appears when we shall step out into the old liberty of owning our own lives. What a celebration we'll have when I come home! I can't quite grasp the joy of it.

I've got to get this letter off quite soon if it's to go to-day. It ought to reach you by January 12th or thereabouts. You may be sure my thoughts will have been with you on Christmas day. I shall look back and remember all the bygone good times and then plan for Christmas, 1917. God keep us all.

Ever yours,

CON.

XXXIII

December 18th, 1916.

My Dearest M.:

I always feel when I write a joint letter to the family that I'm cheating each one of you, but it's so very difficult to get time to write as often as I'd like. It's a week to Christmas and I picture the beginnings of the preparations. I can look back and remember so many such preparations, especially when we were kiddies in London. What good times one has in a life! I've been sitting with my groom by the fire to-night while he dried my clothes. I've mentioned him to you before as having lived in Nelson, and worked at the Silver King mine. We both grew ecstatic over British Columbia.

I am hoping all the time that the boys may be in England at the time I get my leave—I hardly dare hope that any of you will be there. But it would be grand if you could manage it—I long very much to see you all again. I can just imagine my first month home again. I shan't let any of you work. I shall be the incurable boy. I've spent the best part of to-day out in No Man's Land, within seventy yards of the Huns. Quite an experience, I assure you, and one that I wouldn't have missed for worlds. I'll

have heaps to write into novels one day—the vividest kind of local colour. Just at present I have nothing to read but the Christmas number of the *Strand*. It makes me remember the time when we children raced for the latest development of *The Hound of the Baskervilles,* and so many occasions when I had one of "those sniffy colds" and sat by the Highbury fire with a book. Good days, those!

I'm just off to bed now, and will finish this to-morrow. Bed is my greatest luxury nowadays.

December 19th.

The book and chocolate just came, and a bunch of New York papers. All were most welcome. I was longing for something to read. To-morrow I have to go forward to observe. Two of our officers are on leave, so it makes the rest of us work pretty hard. What do you think of the Kaiser's absurd peace proposals? The man must be mad.

The best of love,

CON.

XXXIV

December 20th, 1916.

DEAR MR. T.:

Just back from a successful argument with Fritz, to find your kind good wishes. It's rather

a lark out here, though a lark which may turn against you any time. I laugh a good deal more than I mope. Anything really horrible has a ludicrous side—it's like Mark Twain's humour—a gross exaggeration. The maddest thing of all to me is that a person so willing to be amiable as I am should be out here killing people for principle's sake. There's no rhyme or reason—it can't be argued. Dimly one thinks he sees what is right and leaves father and mother and home, as though it were for the Kingdom of Heaven's sake. Perhaps it is. If one didn't pin his faith to that "perhaps"——. One can't explain.

A merry Christmas to you.

Yours very sincerely,

CONINGSBY DAWSON.

XXXV

December 20th, 1916.

DEAR MR. A. D.:

I've just come in from an argument with Fritz when your chocolate formed my meal. You were very kind to think of me and to send it, and you were extraordinarily understanding in the letter that you sent me. One's life out here is like a pollarded tree—all the lower branches

are gone—one gazes on great nobilities, on the fascinating horror of Eternity sometimes—I said horror, but it's often fine in its spaciousness—one gazes on many inverted splendours of Titans, but it's giddy work being so high and rarefied, and all the gentle past seems gone. That's why it is pleasant in this grimy anonymity of death and courage to get reminders, such as your letter, that one was once localised and had a familiar history. If I come back, I shall be like Rip Van Winkle, or a Robinson Crusoe—like any and all of the creatures of legend and history to whom abnormality has grown to seem normal. If you can imagine yourself living in a world in which every day is a demonstration of a Puritan's conception of what happens when the last trump sounds, then you have some idea of my queer situation. One has come to a point when death seems very inconsiderable and only failure to do one's duty is an utter loss. Love and the future, and all the sweet and tender dreams of bygone days are like a house in which the blinds are lowered and from which the sight has gone. Landscapes have lost their beauty, everything God-made and man-made is destroyed except man's power to endure with a smile the things he once most dreaded, because he believes that only so may he be righteous in his own eyes.

How one has longed for that sure confidence in the petty failings of little living—the confidence to believe that he can stand up and suffer for principle! God has given all men who are out here that opportunity—the supremest that can be hoped for—so, in spite of exile, Christmas for most of us will be a happy day. Does one see more truly life's worth on a battlefield? I often ask myself that question. Is the contempt that is hourly shown for life the real standard of life's worth? I shrug my shoulders at my own unanswerable questions—all I know is that I move daily with men who have everything to live for who, nevertheless, are urged by an unconscious magnanimity to die. I don't think any of our dead pity themselves—but they would have done so if they had faltered in their choice. One lives only from sunrise to sunrise, but there's a more real happiness in this brief living than I ever knew before, because it is so exactingly worth while.

Thank you again for your kindness.

Very sincerely yours,

C. D.

The suggestion that we might all meet in London in January, 1917, was a hope rather than an expectation. We received a cable from

France on Sunday, December 17th, 1916, and left New York on December 30th. We were met in London by the two sailor-sons, who were expecting appointments at any moment, and Coningsby arrived late in the evening of January 13th. He was unwell when he arrived, having had a near touch of pneumonia. The day before he left the front he had been in action, with a temperature of 104. There were difficulties about getting his leave at the exact time appointed, but these he overcame by exchanging leave with a brother-officer. He travelled from the Front all night in a windowless train, and at Calais was delayed by a draft of infantry which he had to take over to England. The consequence of this delay was that the meeting at the railway station, of which he had so long dreamed, did not come off. We spent a long day, going from station to station, misled by imperfect information as to the arrival of troop trains. At Victoria Station we saw two thousand troops arrive on leave, men caked with trench-mud, but he was not among them. We reluctantly returned to our hotel in the late afternoon and gave up expecting him. There was all the time a telegram at the hotel from him, giving the exact place and time of his arrival, but it was not delivered until it was too late to meet

him. He arrived at ten o'clock, and at the same time his two brothers, who had been summoned in the morning to Southampton, entered the hotel, having been granted special leave to return to London. A night's rest did wonders for Coningsby, and the next day his spirits were as high as in the old days of joyous holiday. During the next eight days we lived at a tense pitch of excitement. We went to theatres, dined in restaurants, met friends, and heard from his lips a hundred details of his life which could not be communicated in letters. We were all thrilled by the darkened heroic London through which we moved, the London which bore its sorrows so proudly, and went about its daily life with such silent courage. We visited old friends to whom the war had brought irreparable bereavements, but never once heard the voice of self-pity, of murmur or complaint. To me it was an incredible England; an England purged of all weakness, stripped of flabbiness, regenerated by sacrifice. I had dreamed of no such transformation by anything I had read in American newspapers and magazines. I think no one can imagine the completeness of this rebirth of the soul of England who has not dwelt, if only for a few days, among its people.

Coningsby's brief leave expired all too soon.

We saw him off from Folkestone, and while we were saying good-bye to him, his two brothers were on their way to their distant appointments with the Royal Naval Motor Patrol in the North of Scotland. We left Liverpool for New York on January 27th, and while at sea heard of the diplomatic break between America and Germany. The news was received on board the *S. S. St. Paul* with rejoicing. It was Sunday, and the religious service on board concluded with the Star-Spangled Banner.

XXXVI

December 28th, 1916.

DEAREST ALL:

I'm writing you this letter because I expect to-night is a busy-packing one with you. The picture is in my mind of you all. How splendid it is of you to come! I never thought you would really, not even in my wildest dream of optimism. There have been so many times when I scarcely thought that I would ever see you again—now the unexpected and hoped-for happens. It's ripping!

I've put in an application for special leave in case the ordinary leave should be cut off. I think I'm almost certain to arrive by the 11th. Won't we have a time? I wonder what we'll want to

do most—sit quiet or go to theatres? The nine days of freedom—the wonderful nine days—will pass with most tragic quickness. But they'll be days to remember as long as life lasts.

Shall I see you standing on the station when I puff into London—or will it be Folkestone where we meet—or shall I arrive before you? I somehow think it will be you who will meet me at the barrier at Charing Cross, and we'll taxi through the darkened streets down the Strand, and back to our privacy. How impossible it sounds—like a vision of heart's desire in the night.

Far, far away I see the fine home-coming, like a lamp burning in a dark night. I expect we shall all go off our heads with joy and be madder than ever. Who in the old London days would have imagined such a nine days of happiness in the old places as we are to have together.

God bless you, till we meet,

CON.

XXXVII

January 4th, 1917.
10.30 p.m.

MY DEAREST ONES:

This letter is written to welcome you to England, but I may be with you when it is opened.

It was glorious news to hear that you were coming—I was only playing a forlorn bluff when I sent those cables. You're on the sea at present and should be half way over. Our last trip over together you marvelled at the apparent indifference of the soldiers on board, and now you're coming to meet one of your own fresh from the Front. A change!

O what a nine days we're going to have together—the most wonderful that were ever spent. I dream of them, tell myself tales about them, live them over many times in imagination before they are realised. Sometimes I'm going to have no end of sleep, sometimes I'm going to keep awake every second, sometimes I'm going to sit quietly by a fire, and sometimes I'm going to taxi all the time. I can't fit your faces into the picture—it seems too unbelievable that we are to be together once again. To-day I've been staging our meeting—if you arrive first, and then if I arrive before you, and lastly if we both hit London on the same day. You mustn't expect me to be a sane person. You're three rippers to do this—and I hope you'll have an easy journey. The only ghost is the last day, when the leave train pulls out of Charing Cross. But we'll do that smiling, too; C'est la guerre.

Yours always and ever, Con.

XXXVIII

January 6th, 1917.

My Dear Ones:

I have just seen a brother officer aboard the ex-London bus en route for Blighty. How I wished I could have stepped on board that ex-London perambulator to-night! "Pickerdilly Cirkuss, 'Ighbury, 'Ighgate, Welsh 'Arp—all the wye." O my, what a time I'll have when I meet you! I shall feel as though if anything happens to me after my return you'll be able to understand so much more bravely. These blinkered letters, with only writing and no touch of live hands, convey so little. When we've had a good time together and sat round the fire and talked interminably you'll be able to read so much more between the lines of my future letters. To-morrow you ought to land in England, and to-morrow night you should sleep in London. I am trying to swop my leave with another man, otherwise it won't come till the 15th. I am looking forward every hour to those miraculous nine days which we are to have together. You can't imagine with your vividest imagination the contrast between nine days with you in London and my days where I am now. A battalion went by yesterday, marching into action, and its band was

playing I've a Sneakin' Feelin' in My Heart That I Want to Settle Down. We all have that sneaking feeling from time to time. I tell myself wonderful stories in the early dark mornings and become the architect of the most wonderful futures.

I'm coming to join you just as soon as I know how—at the worst I'll be in London on the 16th of this month.

Ever yours,

CON.

The following letters were written after Coningsby had met his family in London.

XXXIX

January 24th, 1917.

MY DEAR ONES:

I have had a chance to write you sooner than I expected, as I stopped the night where I disembarked, and am catching my train to-day.

It's strange to be back and under orders after nine days' freedom. Directly I landed I was detailed to march a party—it was that that made me lose my train—not that I objected, for I got one more sleep between sheets. I picked up on the boat in the casual way one does, with three other

officers, so on landing we made a party to dine together, and had a very decent evening. I wasn't wanting to remember too much then, so that was why I didn't write letters.

What good times we have to look back on and how much to be thankful for, that we met altogether. Now we must look forward to the summer and, perhaps, the end of the war. What a mad joy will sweep across the world on the day that peace is declared!

This visit will have made you feel that you have a share in all that's happening over here and are as real a part of it as any of us. I'm awfully proud of you for your courage.

Yours lovingly,

CON.

XL

January 26th, 1917.

MY VERY DEAR ONES:

Here I am back—my nine days' leave a dream. I got into our wagon-lines last night after midnight, having had a cold ride along frozen roads through white wintry country. I was only half-expected, so my sleeping-bag hadn't been unpacked. I had to wake my batman and tramp about a mile to the billet; by the time I got there every one was asleep, so I spread out

my sleeping-sack and crept in very quietly. For the few minutes before my eyes closed I pictured London, the taxis, the gay parties, the mystery of lights. I was roused this morning with the news that I had to go up to the gun-position at once. I stole just sufficient time to pick up a part of my accumulated mail, then got on my horse and set out. At the guns, I found that I was due to report as liaison officer, so here I am in the trenches again writing to you by candle-light. How wonderfully we have bridged the distance in spending those nine whole days together. And now it is over, and I am back in the trenches, and to-morrow you're sailing for New York.

I can't tell you what the respite has meant to me. There have been times when my whole past life has seemed a myth and the future an endless prospect of carrying on. Now I can distantly hope that the old days will return.

When I was in London half my mind was at the Front; now that I'm back in the trenches half my mind is in London. I re-live our gay times together; I go to cosy little dinners; I sit with you in the stalls, listening to the music; then I tumble off to sleep, and dream, and wake up to find the dream a delusion. It's a fine and

manly contrast, however, between the game one plays out here and the fretful trivialities of civilian life.

XLI

January 27th.

I got as far as this and then "something" happened. Twenty-four hours have gone by and once more it's nearly midnight and I write to you by candle-light. Since last night I've been with these infantry boy-officers who are doing such great work in such a careless spirit of jolliness. Any softness which had crept into me during my nine days of happiness has gone. I'm glad to be out here and wouldn't wish to be anywhere else till the war is ended.

It's a week to-day since we were at *Charlie's Aunt*—such a cheerful little party! I expect the boys are doing their share of remembering too somewhere on the sea at present. I know you are, as you round the coast of Ireland and set out for the Atlantic.

I've not been out of my clothes for three days and I've another day to go yet. I brought my haversack into the trenches with me; on opening it I found that some kind hands had slipped into it some clean socks and a bottle of Horlick's Malted Milk tablets.

The signallers in a near-by dug-out are singing Keep the Home-Fires Burning Till the Boys Come Home. That's what we're all doing, isn't it—you at your end and we at ours? The brief few days of possessing myself are over and once more stern duty lies ahead. But I thank God for the chance I've had to see again those whom I love, and to be able to tell them with my own lips some of the bigness of our life at the Front. No personal aims count beside the great privilege which is ours to carry on until the war is over.

All my thoughts are with you—so many memories of kindness. I keep on picturing things I ought to have done—things I ought to have told you. Always I can see, Oh, so vividly, the two sailor brothers waving good-bye as the train moved off through the London dusk, and then that other and forlorner group of three, standing outside the dock gates with the sentry like the angel in Eden, turning them back from happiness. With an extraordinary aloofness I watched myself moving like a puppet away from you whom I love most dearly in all the world—going away as if going were a thing so usual.

I'm asking myself again if there isn't some new fineness of spirit which will develop from this war and survive it. In London, at a dis-

tance from all this tragedy of courage, I felt that I had slipped back to a lower plane; a kind of flabbiness was creeping into my blood—the old selfish fear of life and love of comfort. It's odd that out here, where the fear of death should supplant the fear of life, one somehow rises into a contempt for everything which is not bravest. There's no doubt that the call for sacrifice, and perhaps the supreme sacrifice, can transform men into a nobility of which they themselves are unconscious. That's the most splendid thing of all, that they themselves are unaware of their fineness.

I'm now waiting to be relieved and am hurrying to finish this so that I may mail it as soon as I get back to the battery. There's a whole sack of letters and parcels waiting for me there, and I'm as eager to get to them as a kiddy to inspect his Christmas stocking. I always undo the string and wrappings with a kind of reverence, trying to picture the dear kneeling figures who did them up. In London I didn't dare to let myself go with you—I couldn't say all that was in my heart—it wouldn't have been wise. Don't ever doubt that the tenderness was there. Even though one is only a civilian in khaki, some of the soldier's sternness becomes second nature.

All the country is covered with snow—it's bril-

liant clear weather, more like America than Europe. I'm feeling strong as a horse, ever so much better than I felt when on leave. Life is really tremendously worth living, in spite of the war.

XLII

January 28th.

I'm back at the battery, sitting by a cosy fire. I might be up at Kootenay by the look of my surroundings. I'm in a shack with a really truly floor, and a window looking out on moonlit whiteness. If it wasn't for the tapping of the distant machine guns—tapping that always sounds to me like the nailing up of coffins—I might be here for pleasure. In imagination I can see your great ship, with all its portholes aglare, ploughing across the darkness to America. The dear sailor brothers I can't quite visualise; I can only see them looking so upright and pale when we said good-bye. It's getting late and the fire's dying. I'm half asleep; I've not been out of my clothes for three nights. I shall tell myself a story of the end of the war and our next meeting—it'll last from the time that I creep into my sack until I close my eyes. It's a glorious life.

Yours very lovingly,

Con

XLIII

January 31st, 1917.

Dear Mr. and Mrs. M.:

It was extremely good of you to remember me. I got back from leave in London on the 26th and found the cigarettes waiting for me. One hasn't got an awful lot of pleasures left, but smoking is one of them. I feel particularly doggy when I open my case and find my initials on them.

I expect you'll have heard all the news of my leave long before this reaches you. We had a splendid time and the greatest of luck. My sailor brothers were with me all but two days, and my people were in England only a few days before I arrived.

This is a queer adventure for a peaceable person like myself—it blots out all the past and reduces the future to a speck. One hardly hopes that things will ever be different, but looks forward to interminable years of carrying on. My leave rather corrected that frame of mind; it came as a surprise to be forced to realise that not all the world was living under orders on womanless, childless battlefields. But we don't need any pity—we manage our good times, and are sorry for the men who aren't here, for it's a

wonderful thing to have been chosen to sacrifice and perhaps to die that the world of the future may be happier and kinder.

This letter is rather disjointed; I'm in charge of the battery for the time, and messages keep on coming in, and one has to rush out to give the order to fire.

It's an American night—snow-white and piercing, with a frigid moon sailing quietly. I think the quiet beauty of the sky is about the only thing in Nature that we do not scar and destroy with our fighting.

Good-bye, and thank you ever so much.

Yours very sincerely,

CONINGSBY DAWSON.

XLIV

February 1st, 1917.
11 p.m.

DEAR FATHER:

Your picture of the black days when no letter comes from me sets me off scribbling to you at this late hour. All to-day I've been having a cold but amusing time at the O. P. (Forward Observation Post). It seems brutal to say it, but taking potshots at the enemy when they present themselves is rather fun. When you

watch them scattering like ants before the shell whose direction you have ordered, you somehow forget to think of them as individuals, any more than the bear-hunter thinks of the cubs that will be left motherless. You watch your victims through your glasses as God might watch his mad universe. Your skill in directing fire makes you what in peace times would be called a murderer. Curious! You're glad, and yet at close quarters only in hot blood would you hurt a man.

I'd been back for a little over an hour when I had to go forward again to guide in some guns. The country was dazzlingly white in the moonlight. As far as eye could see every yard was an old battlefield; beneath the soft white fleece of snow lay countless unburied bodies. Like frantic fingers tearing at the sky, all along the horizon, Hun lights were shooting up and drifting across our front. Tap-tap-tappity went the machine-guns; whoo-oo went the heavies, and they always stamp like angry bulls. I had to come back by myself across the heroic corruption which the snow had covered. All the way I asked myself why was I not frightened. What has happened to me? Ghosts should walk here if anywhere. Moreover, I know that I shall be frightened again when the war is ended. Do you remember how you once offered me money to walk

through the Forest of Dean after dark, and I wouldn't? I wouldn't if you offered it to me now. You remember Meredith's lines in "The Woods of Westermain":

> "All the eyeballs under hoods
> Shroud you in their glare;
> Enter these enchanted woods
> You who dare."

Maybe what re-creates one for the moment is the British officer's uniform, and even more the fact that you are not asked, but expected, to do your duty. So I came back quite unruffled across battered trenches and silent mounds to write this letter to you.

My dear father, I'm over thirty, and yet just as much a little boy as ever. I still feel overwhelmingly dependent on your good opinion and love. I'm glad that they are black days when you have no letters from me. I love to think of the rush to the door when the postman rings and the excited shouting up the stairs, "Quick, one from Con."

February 2nd.

You see by the writing how tired I was when I reached this point. It's nearly twenty-four hours later and again night. The gramophone is playing an air from *La Tosca* to which the guns

beat out a bass accompaniment. I close my eyes and picture the many times I have heard the (probably) German orchestras of Broadway Joy Palaces play that same music. How incongruous that I should be listening to it here and under these circumstances! It must have been listened to so often by gay crowds in the beauty places of the world. A romantic picture grows up in my mind of a blue night, the laughter of youth in evening dress, lamps twinkling through trees, far off the velvety shadow of water and mountains, and as a voice to it all, that air from *La Tosca*. I can believe that the silent people near by raise themselves up in their snow-beds to listen, each one recalling some ecstatic moment before the dream of life was shattered.

There's a picture in the Pantheon at Paris, I remember; I believe it's called *To Glory*. One sees all the armies of the ages charging out of the middle distance with Death riding at their head. The only glory that I have discovered in this war is in men's hearts—it's not external. Were one to paint the spirit of this war he would depict a mud landscape, blasted trees, an iron sky; wading through the slush and shell-holes would come a file of bowed figures, more like outcasts from the Embankment than soldiers. They're loaded down like pack animals, their shoulders

are rounded, they're wearied to death, but they go on and go on. There's no "To Glory" about what we're doing out here; there's no flash of swords or splendour of uniforms. There are only very tired men determined to carry on. The war will be won by tired men who could never again pass an insurance test, a mob of broken counter-jumpers, ragged ex-plumbers and quite unheroic persons. We're civilians in khaki, but because of the ideals for which we fight we've managed to acquire soldiers' hearts.

My flow of thought was interrupted by a burst of song in which I was compelled to join. We're all writing letters around one candle; suddenly the O. C. looked up and began, God Be With You Till We Meet Again. We sang it in parts. It was in Southport, when I was about nine years old, that I first heard that sung. You had gone for your first trip to America, leaving a very lonely family behind you. We children were scared to death that you'd be drowned. One evening, coming back from a walk on the sand-hills, we heard voices singing in a garden, God Be With You Till We Meet Again. The words and the soft dusk, and the vague figures in the English summer garden, seemed to typify the terror of all partings. We've said good-bye so often since, and God has been with us. I don't think any

parting was more hard than our last at the prosaic dock-gates with the cold wind of duty blowing, and the sentry barring your entrance, and your path leading back to America while mine led on to France. But you three were regular soldiers—just as much soldiers as we chaps who were embarking. One talks of our armies in the field, but there are the other armies, millions strong, of mothers and fathers and sisters, who keep their eyes dry, treasure muddy letters beneath their pillows, offer up prayers and wait, wait, wait so eternally for God to open another door.

To-morrow I again go forward, which means rising early and taking a long plod through the snows; that's one reason for not writing any more, and another is that our one poor candle is literally on its last legs.

Your poem, written years ago when the poor were marching in London, is often in my mind:

> "Yesterday and to-day
> Have been heavy with labour and sorrow;
> I should faint if I did not see
> The day that is after to-morrow."

And there's that last verse which prophesied utterly the spirit in which we men at the Front are fighting to-day:

"And for me, with spirit elate
The mire and the fog I press thorough,
For Heaven shines under the cloud
Of the day that is after to-morrow."

We civilians who have been taught so long to love our enemies and do good to them who hate us—much too long ever to make professional soldiers—are watching with our hearts in our eyes for that day which comes after to-morrow. Meanwhile we plod on determinedly, hoping for the hidden glory.

Yours very lovingly,

CON.

XLV

February 3rd, 1917.

DEAR MISSES W.:

You were very kind to remember me at Christmas. *Seventeen* was read with all kinds of gusto by all my brother officers. It's still being borrowed.

I've been back from leave a few days now and am settling back to business again. It was a trifle hard after over-eating and undersleeping myself for nine days, and riding everywhere with my feet up in taxis. I was the wildest little boy. Here it's snowy and bitter. We wear scarves round our ears to keep the frost away and dream

of fires a mile high. All I ask, when the war is ended, is to be allowed to sit asleep in a big armchair and to be left there absolutely quiet. Sleep, which we crave so much at times, is only death done up in sample bottles. Perhaps some of these very weary men who strew our battlefields are glad to lie at last at endless leisure.

Good-bye, and thank you.

Yours very sincerely,

CON.

XLVI

February 4th, 1917.

MY DEAREST MOTHER:

Somewhere in the distance I can hear a piano going and men's voices singing A Perfect Day. It's queer how music creates a world for you in which you are not, and makes you dreamy. I've been sitting by a fire and thinking of all the happy times when the total of desire seemed almost within one's grasp. It never is—one always, always misses it and has to rub the dust from the eyes, recover one's breath and set out on the search afresh. I suppose when you grow very old you learn the lesson of sitting quiet, and the heart stops beating and the total of desire comes to you. And yet I can remember so many happy days, when I was a child in

the summer and later at Kootenay. One almost thought he had caught the secret of carrying heaven in his heart.

By the time this reaches you I'll be in the line again, but for the present I'm undergoing a special course of training. You can't hear the most distant sound of guns, and if it wasn't for the pressure of study, similar to that at *Kingston,* one would be very rested.

Sunday of all days is the one when I remember you most. You're just sitting down to midday dinner,—I've made the calculation for difference of time. You're probably saying how less than a month ago we were in London. That doesn't sound true even when I write it. I wonder how your old familiar surroundings strike you. It's terrible to come down from the mountain heights of a great elation like our ten days in London. I often think of that with regard to myself when the war is ended. There'll be a sense of dissatisfaction when the old lost comforts are regained. There'll be a sense of lowered manhood. The stupendous terrors of Armageddon demand less courage than the uneventful terror of the daily commonplace. There's something splendid and exhilarating in going forward among bursting shells—we, who have done all that, know that when the guns have ceased to

roar our blood will grow more sluggish and we'll never be such men again. Instead of getting up in the morning and hearing your O. C. say, "You'll run a line into trench so-and-so to-day and shoot up such-and-such Hun wire," you'll hear necessity saying, "You'll work from breakfast to dinner and earn your daily bread. And you'll do it to-morrow and to-morrow and to-morrow world without end. Amen." They never put that forever and forever part into their commands out here, because the Amen for any one of us may be only a few hours away. But the big immediate thing is so much easier to do than the prosaic carrying on without anxiety—which is your game. I begin to understand what you have had to suffer now that R. and E. are really at war too. I get awfully anxious about them. I never knew before that either of them owned so much of my heart. I get furious when I remember that they might get hurt. I've heard of a Canadian who joined when he learnt that his best friend had been murdered by Hun bayonets. He came to get his own back and was the most reckless man in his battalion. I can understand his temper now. We're all of us in danger of slipping back into the worship of Thor.

I'll write as often as I can while here, but I

don't get much time—so you'll understand. It's the long nights when one sits up to take the firing in action that give one the chance to be a decent correspondent.

My birthday comes round soon, doesn't it? Good heavens, how ancient I'm getting and without any "grow old along with me" consolation. Well, to grow old is all in the job of living.

Good-bye, and God bless you all.

Yours ever,

CON.

XLVII

February 4th, 1917.

DEAR MR. B.:

I have been intending to write to you for a very long time, but as most of one's writing is done when one ought to be asleep, and sleep next to eating is one of our few remaining pleasures, my intended letter has remained in my head up to now. On returning from a nine days' leave to London the other day, however, I found two letters from you awaiting me and was reproached into effort.

War's a queer game—not at all what one's civilian mind imagined; it's far more horrible and less exciting. The horrors which the civilian mind dreads most are mutilation and death. Out

here we rarely think about them; the thing which wears on one most and calls out his gravest courage is the endless sequence of physical discomfort. Not to be able to wash, not to be able to sleep, to have to be wet and cold for long periods at a stretch, to find mud on your person, in your food, to have to stand in mud, see mud, sleep in mud and to continue to smile—that's what tests courage. Our chaps are splendid. They're not the hair-brained idiots that some war-correspondents depict from day to day. They're perfectly sane people who know to a fraction what they're up against, but who carry on with a grim good-nature and a determination to win with a smile. I never before appreciated as I do to-day the latent capacity for big-hearted endurance that is in the heart of every man. Here are apparently quite ordinary chaps—chaps who washed, liked theatres, loved kiddies and sweethearts, had a zest for life—they're bankrupt of all pleasures except the supreme pleasure of knowing that they're doing the ordinary and finest thing of which they are capable. There are millions to whom the mere consciousness of doing their duty has brought an heretofore unexperienced peace of mind. For myself I was never happier than I am at present; there's a novel zip added to life by the daily risks and the knowledge that at last

you're doing something into which no trace of selfishness enters. One can only die once; the chief concern that matters is *how* and not *when* you die. I don't pity the weary men who have attained eternal leisure in the corruption of our shell-furrowed battles; they "went West" in their supreme moment. The men I pity are those who could not hear the call of duty and whose consciences will grow more flabby every day. With the brutal roar of the first Prussian gun the cry came to the civilised world, "Follow thou me," just as truly as it did in Palestine. Men went to their Calvary singing Tipperary, rubbish, rhymed doggerel, but their spirit was equal to that of any Christian martyr in a Roman amphitheatre. "Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friend." Our chaps are doing that consciously, willingly, almost without bitterness towards their enemies; for the rest it doesn't matter whether they sing hymns or ragtime. They've followed their ideal—freedom—and died for it. A former age expressed itself in Gregorian chants; ours, no less sincerely, disguises its feelings in ragtime.

Since September I have been less than a month out of action. The game doesn't pall as time goes on—it fascinates. We've got to win so that men may never again be tortured by the ingenious

inquisition of modern warfare. The winning of the war becomes a personal affair to the chaps who are fighting. The world which sits behind the lines, buys extra specials of the daily papers and eats three square meals a day, will never know what this other world has endured for its safety, for no man of this other world will have the vocabulary in which to tell. But don't for a moment mistake me—we're grimly happy.

What a serial I'll write for you if I emerge from this turmoil! Thank God, my outlook is all altered. I don't want to live any longer—only to live well.

Good-bye and good luck.

Yours,

CONINGSBY DAWSON.

XLVIII

February 5th, 1917.

MY DEAREST MOTHER:

Aren't the papers good reading now-a-days with nothing to record but success? It gives us hope that at last, anyway before the year is out, the war must end. As you know, I am at the artillery school back of the lines for a month, taking an extra course. I have been meeting a great many young officers from all over the world

and have listened to them discussing their program for when peace is declared. Very few of them have any plans or prospects. Most of them had just started on some course of professional training to which they won't have the energy to go back after a two years' interruption. The question one asks is how will all these men be reabsorbed into civilian life. I'm afraid the result will be a vast host of men with promising pasts and highly uncertain futures. We shall be a holiday world without an income. I'm afraid the hero-worship attitude will soon change to impatience when the soldiers beat their swords into ploughshares and then confess that they have never been taught to plough. That's where I shall score—by beating my sword into a pen. But what to write about——! Everything will seem so little and inconsequential after seeing armies marching to mud and death, and people will soon get tired of hearing about that. It seems as though war does to the individual what it does to the landscapes it attacks—obliterates everything personal and characteristic. A valley, when a battle has done with it, is nothing but earth—exactly what it was when God said, "Let there be Light;" a man just something with a mind purged of the past and ready to observe afresh. I question whether a return to old en-

vironments will ever restore to us the whole of our old tastes and affections. War is, I think, utterly destructive. It doesn't even create courage—it only finds it in the soul of a man. And yet there is one quality which will survive the war and help us to face the temptations of peace —that same courage which most of us have unconsciously discovered out here.

Well, my dear, I have little news—at least, none that I can tell. I'm just about recovered from an attack of "flu." I want to get thoroughly rid of it before I go back to my battery. I hope you all keep well. God bless you all.

Yours ever,

CON.

XLIX

February 6th, 1917.

MY VERY DEAR M.:

I read in to-day's paper that U. S. A. threatens to come over and help us. I wish she would. The very thought of the possibility fills me with joy. I've been light-headed all day. It would be so ripping to live among people, when the war is ended, of whom you need not be ashamed. Somewhere deep down in my heart I've felt a sadness ever since I've been out here, at America's lack of gallantry—it's so easy to

find excuses for not climbing to Calvary; sacrifice was always too noble to be sensible. I would like to see the country of our adoption become splendidly irrational even at this eleventh hour in the game; it would redeem her in the world's eyes. She doesn't know what she's losing. From these carcase-strewn fields of khaki there's a cleansing wind blowing for the nations that have died. Though there was only one Englishman left to carry on the race when this war is victoriously ended, I would give more for the future of England than for the future of America with her ninety millions whose sluggish blood was not stirred by the call of duty. It's bigness of soul that makes nations great and not population. Money, comfort, limousines and ragtime are not the requisites of men when heroes are dying. I hate the thought of Fifth Avenue, with its pretty faces, its fashions, its smiling frivolity. America as a great nation will die, as all coward civilisations have died, unless she accepts the stigmata of sacrifice, which a divine opportunity again offers her.

If it were but possible to show those ninety millions one battlefield with its sprawling dead, its pity, its marvellous forgetfulness of self, I think then—no, they wouldn't be afraid. Fear isn't the emotion one feels—they would ex-

perience the shame of living when so many have shed their youth freely. This war is a prolonged moment of exultation for most of us—we are redeeming ourselves in our own eyes. To lay down one's life for one's friend once seemed impossible. All that is altered. We lay down our lives that the future generations may be good and kind, and so we can contemplate oblivion with quiet eyes. Nothing that is noblest that the Greeks taught is unpractised by the simplest men out here to-day. They may die childless, but their example will father the imagination of all the coming ages. These men, in the noble indignation of a great ideal, face a worse hell than the most ingenious of fanatics ever planned or plotted. Men die scorched like moths in a furnace, blown to atoms, gassed, tortured. And again other men step forward to take their places well knowing what will be their fate. Bodies may die, but the spirit of England grows greater as each new soul speeds upon its way. The battened souls of America will die and be buried. I believe the decision of the next few days will prove to be the crisis in America's nationhood. If she refuses the pain which will save her, the cancer of self-despising will rob her of her life.

This feeling is strong with us. It's past midnight, but I could write of nothing else to-night God bless you.

Yours ever,

Con.

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Epilogue

Samuel Richards retired from military life after his service during the American Revolution—married and raised a family.

I found this clip from the *Vermont Chronicle* of January 1842 of which I assume was an obituary for Samuel Richards. I corrected spelling errors of people's names and adjusted material slightly by adding names in brackets when needed. Other than that it remains unchanged from the original published version.

A REVOLUTIONARY SOLDIER DEAD
Died at Wilkes-Barre Pennsylvania
December 31st at the Residence of His Son-in-Law
Colonel John L. Butler

Samuel Richards—aged 88—late Lieutenant in the Third Connecticut Regiment of Continental troops with Colonel [Samuel] Wyllys. On the alarm from Lexington, at the age of 22, he enlisted in a volunteer company of 100 men, formed at Farmington, Connecticut, and about the 15th of May, 1775, marched for Boston, and was stationed at Roxbury where he received his first commission. From this point he witnessed the battle of Bunker Hill, not being permitted to share in it—it being

unknown till the moment where the real attack would be made. On the evacuation of Boston by the British troops, March 17, 1776, he had the honor of carrying into Boston the American standard, at the head of the column from the Roxbury side.

Eight days afterwards, he marched with the army to New York, and was engaged in the conflicts at Long Island and Harlaem Heights.—In the campaign of 1777 (June) he was at the action of "Scotch Plains" in New Jersey.—In September following he marched with Colonel [Return Jonathan] Meigs's detachment, for the relief of Fort Montgomery, and reached the Hudson, opposite, at the moment the fort surrendered to the British forces. Immediately after, he marched with General [Israel] Putnam's line, to meet the army of [John] Burgoyne, but heard the intelligence of Burgoyne's surrender when within one day's march of the expected battle. In the winter of 1777-1778, he endured the severe winter encampment at West Point, where the companions of his log hut were General [Samuel Holden] Parsons, [Later Yale] President [Timothy] Dwight, and [Tadeusz] Kosciuszko. The hard winter of 1779-1780 was another scene of suffering in the log hut encampment at Morristown.

Here the sufferings of the army from cold, want of clothing and provisions, became so great that in the Spring two regiments, his own and that of Colonel Meigs, mutinied, and were with difficulty pacified by the united influence of the officers. In October, 1780, he witnessed the execution of [John] Andre. "I was on my horse, outside the line of infantry, and could plainly see Andre, and all that passed. He walked up the hill in [Tappan, New York] the place of his execution—arm in arm with Colonel [Alexander] Hamilton—with a firm and graceful step. My feelings had been drawn out favorably towards him, from what had passed, at when I came to view him—elegant in person and every way graceful, at the age of 28—thus led to public execution, they almost overcame me." After bearing the full burden and heat of the Revolutionary day, he retired, at the close of the war, to the place of his nativity, where he spent the remainder of his years, except the four last. He fought the battles of his country—he also

fought the good fight of faith. He early joined the [First Church of Christ] Congregational in Farmington [Connecticut] of which he was an officer (leader or deacon) for about 26 years. In his last sickness—one week only—he gave unequivocal testimony to the excellence of the Christian religion, and his last words expressed an unwavering hope of a blessed immortality through the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. From a regularity and temperance in all his habits of living, rarely attained, he preserved his mental and bodily powers in a remarkable degree, to the last. To the same cause, doubtless, he owed his protracted life.

Samuel Richards wasn't the only one in his family to be involved in war. His great-great grandson Henry Howard Houston Woodward served in World War I and was killed in France on April 1, 1918. He was 22. He was buried at the Suresnes American Cemetery in France at a later date. His father, George Stanley Woodward, was a prominent doctor and society leader in the Philadelphia area. He was also responsible for putting together the writings of Samuel Richards for publication in 1909.

Coningsby Dawson was born in February 1883 in England where he attended Merton College at Oxford—focusing on theological studies initially. He later became enamored with writing and went abroad working with British newspapers on Canadian subjects. Between 1906 and 1910 he worked as a literary editor for the George Doran Publishing Company. While living at his family's home in Massachusetts during this time he wrote several novels which were widely popular. As World War I raged he was offered a commission with the Canadian Field Artillery following his completion of training at the Royal Military College of Canada. He was selected for service in July 1916 and joined the Canadian Expeditionary Services—serving with them until the end of the war. During this time his letters and notes were published in two memoirs while his observations of war were published in two other compilations. Following the end of World War I he continued his writing career—publishing several

novels throughout the 1920s and 1930s. He briefly dabbled in the entertainment industry for a while before retiring to a quiet life with his wife. He died in Los Angeles in August 1959.

Personal writings can have a profound impact on people and history. Over the centuries letters and diaries have told stories in ways that not even the most detailed and researched biographies of historical accounts could ever hope to do. Writing down personal thoughts as well as day-to-day events reveals plenty in letters and diaries. From the books I've read, nothing beats reading a book compiled of letters or a diary. Reliving someone's life through personal writings such as letters and diaries provide an intimacy that an autobiography cannot do.

Most letters and diaries are written with the ideology that they will never be published so there isn't a need to pre-edit the material beforehand. The same ideology cannot be said for an autobiography which is expected to be published and therefore the writing is polished and sanitized several times over before it ends up on a bookshelf in a bookstore or library. Though I assume Dawson knew his letters were going to be published at some point—his descriptions of what he witnessed on the battlefield isn't sanitized and shows exactly what the effect of war is on soldiers and their enemies. Much like what Samuel Richards saw during the American Revolution—the passing of a century didn't change how savage warfare was on those who witness it as well as those who are its victims. Though Richards and Dawson had very different experiences in war—they nevertheless had similar reactions in seeing their fellow soldiers dead or dying before their eyes. War is never pretty no matter the century or country.

About the Authors

(Captain) Samuel Richards served in the American Revolution and witnessed the battles of Bunker Hill and Fort Ticonderoga.

Coningsby Dawson was a well-known British-Canadian-American writer of such popular novels as *House of the Weeping Women*, *Murder Point*, *Road to Avalon*, *Garden without Walls*, *Seventh Christmas*, *Test of Scarlet* and *Vanishing Point* among many. His war memoirs however are what he was best known for. Among them *Carry On: Letters in Wartime 1916-1917*, *Glory of the Trenches*, *Out to Win: Story of America in France* and *Living Bayonets: A Record of the Last Push 1917-1918*. He was also a sought-after editor. He died in Los Angeles in August 1959.

About the Series Editor

Gary Brin was born in 1965 and has lived in the United States Virgin Islands, Hawaii and California. He has edited numerous original literary works over the years—both new and revised. In 2019 he established Standish Press to bring forth interesting fictional and historical material usually ignored by mainstream publishers because of specific views or content. In addition to publishing books, he also created the Nancy Hanks Lincoln Public Library (named after the mother of Abraham Lincoln) in 2014 to make available hard-to-find books to a worldwide audience.

Production Notes

Material on Samuel Richards based on recollections and diary of his experiences during the American Revolution from a 1909 published account. Coningsby Dawson material based on letters and reminiscences to his family from a 1917 published account of his time as a soldier during the First World War.

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Marie Laplace
February 13, 1892
August 16, 1981

Robert J. Questel
June 22, 1911
August 4, 1990

Marie Anicia Berry Questel
January 13, 1912
April 9, 1997

Eugene Albery Brin
March 21, 1932
May 26, 1977

Lucille Questel Brin
February 21, 1940
December 10, 2000

They never got to have the dreams they wanted or expected but their lives were important nevertheless.

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